

midstream

A QUARTERLY JEWISH REVIEW

WINTER, 1959

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From the Four Corners:

LESLIE A. FIEDLER • ALFRED WERNER • HENRY POPKIN

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Statement of Purpose

THE THEODOR HERZL FOUNDATION has been established as an educational agency to promote the study and discussion of problems confronting Jews in the world today. Two overwhelming changes in the context of our Jewish existence—on the one hand, the destruction of one-third of world Jewry, which has erased many political and cultural landmarks, and on the other, the rise of the State of Israel, which has opened broad new horizons—call for a reexamination of basic concepts and the ways to Jewish fulfillment. Equally grave and equally difficult to answer in traditional terms, are the fateful questions that face a world aghast at the threat of its own annihilation. It is against this background that *MIDSTREAM*, A Quarterly Jewish Review, has been conceived.

In sponsoring *MIDSTREAM*, a Zionist publication, we are committed, above all, to free inquiry. We conceive Zionism as, in essence, a questioning of the Jewish *status quo*, and as a steady confrontation of the problems of Jewish existence. It is our hope that *MIDSTREAM* will offer critical interpretation of the past, a searching examination of the present, and afford a medium for considered and independent opinion and for creative cultural expression.

MIDSTREAM is not an official organ, nor do the publishers and editors necessarily identify themselves with views expressed in its pages. It is, rather, our purpose to enable a wide range of thought to appear in the columns of this magazine.

THE THEODOR HERZL
FOUNDATION, INC.

midstream

A Quarterly Jewish Review

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Winter, 1959

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from the four corners

Nebbishes, Gefilte Fish and the Great Conspiracy

By LESLIE A. FIEDLER

FOR SEVERAL months now, I have been walking past the window of Grace Maughan's Gift Shop and staring in at the "Nebbishes," who stare back at me from greeting cards, ash trays, beer mugs and pen stands. Not content with repeating the lines written for them on the spaces they inhabit ("I love you—but what's in it for me?" "You just *think* you're happy!") I swear they wink at me out of their familiar, cynical faces and say: "Nu, *landsman*— what are we doing in Missoula, Montana?" Nebbishes! What does Grace Maughan know of nebbishes, or what can the word mean to her customers, inhabitants of a town which does not even have a dozen Jewish families? I have long since grown used to the Israeli copper in the cases of the Turf Bar. If the Turf can sell fishing tackle and comic books and gimcracks from Japan, why not imports from Israel—now after all just another foreign country, not so remote from us as the orient?

But between Montana and the world of the nebbish (bounded on one side by the dying ghetto and on the other by Greenwich Village) the distances are astronomical. It is by way of the "hate card," that anti-sentimental travesty of the ordinary greeting card—first popularized, I believe, by a Village bookshop fighting to stay in business—that the nebbish has broken through to the American provinces. And the "hate card" has represented the entry into our popular culture not only of certain former properties of the avant-garde (the cartoon style of Steig, the mockery

of bourgeois pieties, a touch of psychoanalysis) but also of Jewish humor and of at least one figure from Jewish folklore, the nebbish himself.

It is all part of that Judaization of American culture on which there has been so much comment of late. It is not, of course, anything entirely unprecedented; Potash and Perlmutter were best-sellers in the opening years of this century, and Charlie Chaplin's debut was almost contemporaneous with theirs. More recently, however, the process has been extraordinarily speeded up and extended: under our very eyes, Huckleberry Finn has become Augie March; Daisy Miller been turned into Marjorie Morningstar (and Marjorie in turn has become Natalie Wood); Eddie Fisher had been drafted as the symbol of Clean Young American Love, while Danny Kaye continues to play our blue-eyed Jester, etc. etc.

Even more important (and certainly more radically *new*) is the fact that the latest middlebrow form of fiction to challenge the long dominance of the Western and the Detective story is that largely Jewish product, science fiction. There are a score of Jewish writers among the most widely read writers in that fashionable genre, as compared with practically none in the two older types of institutionalized fantasy. The basic myths of science fiction reflect the urban outlook, the social consciousness, the utopian concern of the modern secularized Jew. The traditional Jewish Waiting-for-the-Messiah becomes in lay terms the *commitment to the future*, which is the motive force of current science fiction. The notion of a Jewish cowboy is utterly ridiculous, of a Jewish detective, Scotland Yard variety or private eye, nearly as anomal-

ous; but to think of the scientist as a Jew is almost tautological.

Much science fiction, set just before or after the Great Atomic War, embodies the kind of guilty conscience peculiar to such scientist-intellectuals (typically Jewish) as Robert Oppenheimer; while the figure of Einstein presides over the New Heaven and New Earth such literature postulates, replacing an earlier Hebrew God who is dead. Even in its particulars, the universe of science fiction is born Judaized; the wise old tailor, the absurd but sympathetic *yiddische momme* plus a dozen other Jewish stereotypes whizz unchanged across its space and time. Even secret Jewish jokes are made for the cognoscenti: the police on a corrupt, trans-galactic planet are called in the exotic tongue of that world *Ganavim*. And in the Superman comic books (the lowbrow equivalent of science fiction) the same aspirations and anxiety are projected in the improbable disguise of the Secret Savior, who may look like a goy but who is invented by Jews. The biceps are the biceps of Esau, but the dialogue is the dialogue of Jacob.

EVEN FOR those who do not read either books or comics, Jewish culture lies in wait—not only in the gift shop, but in what is our only living museum, the real cultural storehouse of the average man: the Supermarket. There (even in Montanal) beside the headcheese, the sliced ham, the pseudo-hot dogs composed of flour and sawdust, one finds kosher salami; beside the hardtack, ryecrisp and löfsa, matzos; beside the chocolate-covered ants, fried grasshoppers and anchovy hearts, Mother's Gefilte Fish. But whatever is in the Supermarket, like whatever is in *Life* (both organized on the same omnivorous principle: everything glossily packaged and presented without emphasis or distinction) is in the Great Democratic Heart of America. In that heart, at last, Jewish culture as defined by gefilte fish and Natalie Wood,

the Jewish scientist and the nebbish, has established itself as if it meant to stay.

It is odd to realize that, officially at least, the Jew has come to be considered as American (and as respectable) as pumpkin pie. He is even professed as an honorable example by such otherwise bigoted sources as the Citizens Councils of Mississippi. At any rate, the Rev. G. T. Gillespie, D. D., President Emeritus of Belhaven College, writes as follows in a pamphlet recently mailed to highschool graduates all over the United States: "From the days of Abraham . . . the Hebrews . . . became a respected people . . . and they have not only achieved the highest moral and spiritual development of all the peoples of the earth, but have made an invaluable contribution to the moral and spiritual progress of mankind." To be sure, the Rev. Gillespie is not entirely without reservations about Jews and "their inordinate social pride and prejudice which led them to despise the Gentile peoples," but the New Dispensation (plus the demands of making a case for segregation) have persuaded him to be, in the main, grossly flattering.

In a way then, it is a relief (certainly, it seems more human and credible than the greasier pieties of inter-group tolerance) to receive through the mail the hysterical and old-fashioned protest which follows. Even its mimeographed sloppiness, the cheap paper on which it is written seem an assurance that at least its viciousness is from the heart, and not, like the bland, well-printed hypocrisies of the Citizens Councils, from the public relations office of an Institution.

According to studies of . . . Publishers' Weekly, as high as one-third or more of many publishers' lists are the works of Jewish authors, while the Jewish people constitute something like one thirtieth of our population. . . . The authorities of our literature are, chiefly, members of a minority group who . . . have their

own especial bias and prejudice. Every book that goes into print . . . is either written by, edited by, advertised by, published by, or what is common, — all four — Jewish people. . . .

Why are the works of degenerate authors declared "Great American Writing," when often they are in extremely poor English, and are demoralizing and dangerous to our youth? Is it not probable that literary careers are bought from these publishers, just as we would buy a box of soap at the supermarket? There is only one other possibility: these publishers are at war with the American intelligence, as well as its Christian morality.

I HAVE been reading recently some of the early editions of that "degenerate" American author Walt Whitman, and have discovered a secret which I hope is never revealed to Mr. Jack Feltz, the author of the complaint from which I have been quoting. As presently printed, there is a line in *Leaves of Grass* which describes the ideal American poet as "plunging his seminal muscle" into the "merits and demerits" of his country—a metaphor, which, even as it stands, can be considered, I suppose, "demoralizing and dangerous to our youth." Originally, however, Whitman had written not "seminal muscle" but "*semitic* muscle," just another example, most critics would agree, of what Mr. Feltz likes to call "extremely poor English." But it could be read, of course, as a giveaway, an imprudent revelation that the War against Christian Morality was being waged even in 1860 by Whitman's "New York Publishers," Fowler and Wells, who capably disguised their semitic enterprise as a Phrenological Institute. Poor Jack Feltz—he has only begun to discover the depths of the conspiracy that has foisted on us what the hucksters advertise as "Great American Writing!"

It is hard, though, to feel *very* sorry

for him; for despite his sense of being driven to the wall culturally, he is obviously doing all right on the economic front. At least his return address reads: THE JACK FELTZ MINERAL COMPANY, *Uranium Property*. And, God knows, *that* sounds cheerful enough.

Modern Art and the Synagogue

By ALFRED WERNER

A DANGEROUS myth has grown up around the post-war temples and synagogues, in particular those in suburban communities (where most are to be found) and done in a style angrily dubbed "modernistic" by their detractors. Many of those who have looked at these buildings and declare they feel repelled by these "eyesores" (a term they love to use) insist they are the result of a "conspiracy" by artists and architects who have managed to bully unsuspecting laymen into accepting what is entirely undesired. According to this myth, often spread by people who never bothered to make a thorough study of post-war architecture and its goals, these edifices have been "shoved down the throats" of gullible rabbis and trustees. Poor innocents, naïvely yielding to blueprints which they could not possibly read, as the argument goes, they were shocked upon seeing the finished building but were sufficiently poised to conceal their dismay when interviewed by reporters or challenged by nonplussed members of their own congregations. If one were to believe these stories, nobody really feels at ease in any of the hundreds of new houses of worship that have gone up all over the United States in the past fifteen years.

To accept this argument I would have to discard the evidence gathered in trips through forty states. Yet I believe that the people whom I met

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A Quarterly Jewish Review

Though technologically advanced enough to fire a rocket to the moon and beyond, Soviet spokesmen often remain ideologically mired in the political jargon regarding the nature of the Jewish problem that was in vogue in Marxist circles half a century ago. In the following article JOEL CARMICHAEL examines some recent Soviet publications dealing with Israel and the Jews. MR. CARMICHAEL appeared in the Autumn, 1958 issue of this magazine with an essay on "The Nature of Arab Nationalism."

The Moon and Six Rubles

By JOEL CARMICHAEL

AFTER SOME ten years of official silence concerning the State of Israel (if one disregards the international byplay at the United Nations) the Soviet Union has now established its position for the present era.

A booklet of 147 pages has been published by the Soviet State Publishing House for Political Literature, entitled *The State of Israel, Its Position and Politics*, and written by K. Ivanov and Z. Sheinis. The imprint of the State Publishing House, the length of the work, and the number of copies printed (100,000), indicate that it is a major enterprise, and consequently of direct interest to all students of world politics as well as to those with a special interest in the Middle East.

The size of the edition is especially significant if the figures for other books dealing with the Middle East are considered; for instance:

The Arab League, by V. P. Lutsky, 75,000 copies;

The Arab East in International Relations, by P. V. Milogradov, 50,000 copies;

Egypt in Its Struggle and Labor, by A. Bolashov, 50,000 copies;

The Government System of the Arab Countries in the Arab East, by I. Levin and B. Memaiev, 5,000 copies;

Modern Syria, edited by A. F. Sultanov, in 8,000 copies.

Far more important than the contents of the booklet itself—which for the moment may be described quite simply as uncompromisingly hostile to the State of Israel and to Zionism—is the fact that it marks a volte-face in officially expressed Soviet policy. A comparison with the last government publication on the same subject ten years ago, a somewhat less ponderous production entitled *The Palestine Problem*, by I. A. Genin, published in 1948 in 150,000 copies, is a complete contrast to the present publication.

It will be recalled that when the

State of Israel was established, the Soviet regime, in spite of its long history of hostility to Zionism on the ideological plane, had made a decision, presumably on the basis of *Realpolitik*, to sponsor the new State, and indeed vied with the United States at the time in giving it full support in the United Nations and elsewhere. Just because of Communism's long and consistent history of anti-Zionism it must have been felt that some sort of explanation of what may have seemed a reversal of attitude was necessary, and this explanation was given in the above-mentioned pamphlet by Genin.

Genin's 1948 pamphlet represents a thorough endorsement, not to be sure of Zionism, but of the State of Israel, basing its justification on a mixture of material and moral reasons, primarily the vast numbers of displaced Jews left in the wake of the Nazi massacres, the discrimination of the Western powers against the Jews, etc.

Since the two booklets cover substantially the same ground, a comparison of individual points is revealing:

(Genin): "There is one more important matter which cannot be ignored in the solution of the Palestine problem: it is the fate of the hundreds of thousands of Jewish displaced persons in Western Europe" (p. 14).

(Ivanov-Sheinis): "Shocking are the facts about the mockery of the Jewish displaced persons in Western Europe, whom the Zionists forced after the end of the Second World War to go to Israel" (p. 120).

(Genin): "Seven armed Arab countries, united by the Arab League, attacked the State of Israel. . . . In spite of superior technical equipment and in spite of the presence of British officers in the Arab armies, the attempt of the Arab countries to annihilate the Jewish State was a fiasco" (pp. 20, 22).

Ten years later, Ivanov and Sheinis write: "The military failures of the courageously embattled Arabs were the result of transitory historical circumstances and of the absence among the Arabs of unity of aim and action" (p. 22).

These contrasting quotations are enough to establish the sharp change in Soviet tone, and the fixation in propaganda of the series of overtly anti-Israel acts that began in 1955 with the first arms agreement between Czechoslovakia and Nasser's Egypt. The Soviet regime would thus seem to have finished with whatever vacillations it might have been subject to in the recent past, and to have established its current policy in a long-range perspective.

But while the Genin pamphlet of 1948 was quite circumspect in its defense of the establishment of Israel, the new booklet by Ivanov and Sheinis is an altogether crass, robust expression of the traditional anti-Zionism that has characterized Russian Bolshevism since its inception. Its contents are difficult to characterize without vituperation: the booklet is brimming over with the usual combination of invective, misstatement, and downright mendacity that students of the Soviet regime are familiar with. The statistical data which have some relationship to reality are presented in such a framework of partisan misrepresentation as to be utterly misleading except to close students of the subject; the bias of the work is completely unqualified.

ODDLY ENOUGH, despite the fact that Lenin's initial attitude toward the Jewish Question arose merely out of his polemic against the Jewish Bund (the old Russian Socialist anti-Zionist Jewish organization) and because the universal claims of Marxism were in opposition to any Jewish national movement (not necessarily Zionist) in

Russia, once the Jewish Bund split in two, and one section joined the Russian Communist Party after the revolution, all Jewish questions were left to what was now called the "Jewish Section" (*Yevsektzia*) of the Communist Party, where they received the implacable, virulent, and hyper-zealous treatment to be expected from tardy and insecure converts.

Thus, while the "arguments" against both Israel and Zionism have their roots in a coarse and vulgarized version of Marxism, they have been given special violence and venom by the ingrown, encranked attitude of the Jewish Bund itself.

An article is not, perhaps, appropriate for a rehearsal of these arguments: they are part of the stock-pile of the Soviet and Communist clichés on standard issues. They may be summed up briefly as follows:

The very existence of Israel is said to be the result of a conspiracy among the big capitalists in France, Britain and America to maintain an outpost in the Middle East for their aggressive imperialism against the oil-rich Arab States.

Big capital, since it needed a mask for its machinations among the Jewish masses itself, allied itself with the corrupt and reactionary clique of the so-called Zionist Socialists, who, bent on exploiting the non—or anti-Zionist Jewish masses in the interests of big capital, Gentile and Jewish, were more than willing to act as the running dogs of the Western plutocrats.

Of this line of argumentation perhaps the most significant single strand is the consistency with which Ivanov and Sheinis attempt to split the Zionists from the rest of the Jewish community, doubtless to avoid charges of anti-Semitism. It is based on the assumption, never explained, that the "Zionist" or "Israel authorities" are somehow in-

initely remote from the "Jewish toiling masses," do not represent them, and systematically sabotage their interests.

Thus, the Israel authorities, "against the will of the toiling masses of their own country," have failed to settle the problem of the Arab majority (p. 29). For that matter even the great increase in the "Jewish national minority" between the two wars—i.e., the massive Jewish immigration—is claimed to have been the work of the British (p. 13). The impression that the Zionists in Palestine are somehow a tiny clique entirely distinct from the "Jewish toiling masses" (p. 15) is maintained throughout, even when it is a question of discussing actual political parties, that is, organizations which do, after all, reflect an electorate.

In short, on this level of "polemic" what Soviet policy is now primarily concerned with is guarding against the notion that Zionism was ever a mass movement that contended with the Communist Party for Jewish support. No one reading the Ivanov-Sheinis opus would ever dream that Zionism had ever had any appeal for the Jewish masses in Eastern Europe and elsewhere, or that long before the State of Israel was actually established, long before the First World War, there was such a thing as a movement among the "Jewish toiling masses" which infuriated the Bolsheviks to such an extent that when they took power Zionism was made a capital crime against the state.

The great problem for the Soviet authorities, of course, on a broad theoretical level, is to distinguish between "good" and "bad" nationalisms. Now that the Communists, in their capacity as a world power that operates as a state and not merely as a movement of ideas, have decided to endorse nationalism more or less as such, it is necessary to indicate why some particular nationalism — that is, a nationalism

which they don't think will be subservient to them — is no good. The situation has gone back to what it was before the Second World War, when Zionism was proscribed as a movement; today, it is necessary to give the reasons for proscribing Zionism, in its state form, as a legitimate nationalism. The time when Tsarapkin, Soviet delegate at the United Nations in 1948, defended the proposed creation of Israel on the basis of Jewish national claims, must accordingly be regarded as an interlude of vacillation.

According to present-day Soviet policy, as expressed by Ivanov and Sheinis, not only is Jewish nationalism bad as such, especially as incarnate in the State of Israel, but the Jews should not exist as a distinct people at all. Harking back to Lenin's view of the Jewish problem long before the revolution and the emergence of the Zionist movement, while he was still engaged in his contest with the Bund, Ivanov and Sheinis sum up the Soviet attitude as follows:

Israel's bourgeois ruling circles even today have proved incapable of understanding that the Jewish question can be solved not by isolation from other peoples, but only in a close fraternal commonwealth with other peoples, including the Arab people among whom the Israelis live (p. 147).

THIS is obviously an up-to-date version, tailored to fit the Middle East, of the tried and tested arguments in favor of assimilation as the only solution of the Jewish problem. The oddity here perhaps is that Ivanov and Sheinis, in spite of the profusion of the classic arguments in favor of assimilation, written by both Jews and Gentiles, should have found themselves reduced to using Alfred Lilienthal, of the American Council for Judaism, as their "authority." A lengthy quotation taken from his book, *What Price Israel?* is squeezed

into the slot reserved for Jewish arguments against Jews, backed with exaggerations of the "color-bar" practised by European Jews against Yemenites, Moroccans, etc.

The counterweight to Ivanov and Sheinis's "ideological" destruction of Zionism, Jewish nationalism, etc. is a harrowing description of Israel's economic impasse. Here the picture is one of unrelieved hopelessness: the economic difficulties of the country are of course presented with no qualification, and, moreover, as though they were all due not merely to the difficulty of setting up such a state, but were the result of a foreign capitalist conspiracy to extend monopolistic control inside Israel, on the one hand, (though why profit-seekers should leap on to a sinking ship is not explained), and on the other by the self-seeking motives of the Zionist Clique in displacing British monopolies in favor of American (though elsewhere British and American capitalists are at one in their exploitation of Israel as an outpost of imperialist aggression).

There are a number of downright absurdities. Ivanov and Sheinis claim, for instance, that Israel can live on its own foodstuffs without imports (p. 45) (while simultaneously maintaining that it depends exclusively on foreign monopoly capital); that the ratio of Israelis to Arabs had been one-to-forty, but that the Israel leaders hope to reduce it by 1960 to one-to-twenty, and later on to one-to-five, which would ultimately mean, presumably, a total Israeli population of sixteen million in the near future — more than the total number of Jews in the entire world.

The three political parties discussed are the Communist Party, which is, of course, persecuted but represents the "toiling masses" (Mikunis, as well as Lilienthal, are quoted from extensively), *Herut*, which is arch-reactionary, and Mapai, which is only reactionary.

To sum up, the portrait of Israel is utterly black, unrelieved by a single ray of hope, except possibly that the "toiling masses" will finally overcome the oppression of the Zionist minority which has long since sold out to Anglo-American monopoly capital, and then presumably merge with the "Arab people."

There is, however, a curious lopsidedness in the booklet due to the attempt to characterize the Arab national movement as a "good" nationalism, which thus deserves the support of all "progressively-minded" people. Here follows a most striking contrast between the very full, though violently biased account of Zionism and Israel, and the almost incredibly naive, arid, abstract characterization of both Arab nationalism as such and the Arabic-speaking countries in general. The most simple-minded clichés of the Arab propagandists are accepted at face-value and passed on without the slightest attempt at evaluation. It is clear from the adulatory approach that the reader is to understand that Arab nationalism has been given the Kremlin's stamp of approval.

In a routine, matter-of-fact way the most extravagant rhetoric characteristic of the Arab nationalists is repeated: the Arabian Peninsula is as large as all Western Europe; the "Arab" world stretches from the Atlantic Ocean to the Persian Gulf, etc.

ON THE CULTURAL side, the whole of Moslem history is presented to the Arabs free of charge: it was not Moslems, but "Arabs" who were responsible for algebra, trigonometry, numerals, medicine. The mere fact that these "Arabs" were uniformly Persians, Arameans, Jews, Berbers, etc., is not referred to: the childishness of the approach is epitomized by the remark, evidently addressed to a grotesquely

provincial reader, that Rimsky-Korsakov and some other musicians thought highly of the "Arabs" as subjects for their operas! In fact Islamic civilization is simply called Arab civilization and let go at that.

Unfortunately, however, Ivanov and Sheinis go on, despite the brilliance of "Arab" achievements, this whole area for "thousands of years back" has been under the spell of an "evil fairy" — i.e., "colonialism," which has set its yoke on the neck of the "Arabs" for all these years, and has become especially oppressive since the discovery of oil by the "capitalist bandits."

This is especially delicious when one recalls that no one had ever had any interest in the Arabs until the birth of Islam. Then it was they who swiftly extended their rule to a variety of other peoples, who accepted Arabic and a primitive version of what came to be Mohammedanism, whereupon the Arabs proper retired to the Arabian desert once again, and precisely since the discovery of oil have done infinitely better than ever before. They now have at their disposal, in fact, some two-thirds of the world's oil reserves, and on the political plane, for that matter, have even achieved independence practically everywhere.

Whatever may be said about the evils of colonialism in Africa and Asia as a whole, especially throughout the Nineteenth Century (and there is much to be said), those evils, precisely at the moment they began to have some effect on the Arabic-speaking countries, were substantially mitigated, if not altogether neutralized, by the softening up of imperialism, plus the oil benefits which the Arabs now share with the "capitalist bandits."

This claim is, in fact, merely part of the arsenal of rhetorical clichés with which the Arab leaders themselves bamboozle their own followers, as well as

Western statesmen: it has long since lost its substance. Even the most profitable business enterprise in history, Aramco, is hyper-deferential to its Arab proteges: to say that the Saudi-Arabian Government, with its fabulous oil revenues, is being "exploited" by the "colonialists" is merely amusing.

Even in the case of Egypt, the only country to have been seriously occupied by a non-Moslem power for any length of time, (if we disregard the sufferings caused by the notoriously abortive Crusades) that period is long since past. On the contrary, precisely because of world rivalries, Nasser is now substantially independent in his relations with Western powers. In point of fact, the only people who oppressed the Arabs for any length of time at all were their fellow-Moslems, the Turks, who—as we can see nowadays—were highly inefficient at it.

This note of naive magnification runs through the Ivanov-Sheinis booklet, and even involves them in some bizarre factual misstatements: Saudi Arabia is arbitrarily given seven million inhabitants, though there has never been a census and it is most unlikely that it would have more than two or three million people. In "demonstrating" the friendliness of Jews and Arabs before Zionism, Ivanov and Sheinis agilely leap over some eight centuries: they say that ever since the Romans dispersed the Jews in the First Century, the "Arabs" lived peacefully side by side with the Jews!

For the rest, the booklet repeats the Arab "version" of all disputes with the Israelis: after the establishment of Israel, the Arab refugees were "expelled" from the country; the Arab peasants under the British Mandate "were expelled from the lands they cultivated" by Jewish land purchases arranged by big business, etc. This last is an old, dis-

proved *ante-bellum* charge, warmed up for present day Soviet use.

The bridge between the booklet's anti-Zionist and pro-"toilers" attitude is established rhetorically. In discussing the genesis of the national movement, Ivanov and Sheinis say: "A wave of the Arab movement of liberation also arose in other Arab countries—Iraq, and Saudi-Arabia," which "also carried over with great force to Palestine, where in the struggle against the British colonial regime the Arabs also played an important role for a long time, and which after the Second World War the Jewish toiling masses also joined with still greater force" (p. 12).

The "still greater force" must be a reference to the fact that it was the Jewish "toiling masses" who carried on the struggle against the British regime so effectively that the latter finally left the country.

The Jews are, in short, held responsible for everything. Since Arab enmity to Israel "favored the colonialists, insofar as it allowed them to play on the contradictions between Israel and the Arab countries in order to retain their positions in the Middle East," (p. 24) and the "United States is interested in Arab-Israel conflicts" (p. 39) it is somehow the fault of the Jews that colonialism in the Middle East still exists, that there are national conflicts, and that, in sum, the Middle East is the trouble-spot it is.

ENOUGH HAS BEEN said to indicate broadly the general tenor of the book and its political tendency. There is a further question: Just whom is the Ivanov-Sheinis booklet directed at?

The booklet has already aroused a storm of irritation in Israel, where it has of course been very widely commented on. Israeli commentators, perhaps with undue self-absorption, have generally taken the view that it was

published in order to intimidate Soviet Jewry and make it give up all its hopes in Israel, by branding Israel as the root of all evil and demonstrating its inherent hopelessness as a solution of the Jewish problem. The Israelis seem to have thought that the booklet is intended to wean Soviet Jews away from Israel altogether and make them finally accept the "Leninist" solution of assimilation in a "Socialist society."

This Israeli reaction, while perfectly understandable, seems one-sided.

It must be recalled that the Soviet propaganda agencies have stepped up their anti-Israel campaign since the Sixth Youth Festival in Moscow in the summer of 1957. It was evident at this festival that Soviet Jewish interest in Israel had continued unabated, a fact which was not at all surprising, in view of the repeated incidents that have taken place in the Soviet Union whenever an Israeli representative has had a chance to come in contact with the local Jewish population (such as Golda Meir's visit to a Moscow synagogue).

The 1957 festival was followed by articles and comments in literally scores of magazines and newspapers, presenting Israel in the most repulsive light possible, where no Soviet Jew could have any conceivable future. These articles, in accordance with the general tone of Soviet propaganda, were full of the customary misstatements, exaggerations, and outright fictions, but there has been no indication, according to what recent visitors to the Soviet Union have to report, that Soviet Jews have lost their sentimental attachment to Israel.

Hence it seems unlikely, on the face of it, that a short booklet, rather tedious to read, printed in only 100,000 copies, could hope to achieve the same result, much more easily accomplished, as scores of newspapers read by millions throughout the Soviet Union.

This impression — that the booklet is not designed for Jews at all—is reinforced by its actual emphasis on various themes. Its general style, however distorted, would not, in itself, be displeasing to Soviet Jews already emotionally involved in the destinies of Israel.

When one considers, for instance, that the actual conditions in Israel are only dealt with—completely one-sidedly to be sure—in seventeen out of the 147 pages of the booklet, which is basically a politico-philosophical profile of the history of the State of Israel and the Zionist movement as a whole, it seems reasonable to assume that it could not have been aimed at a Jewish audience, which though it could not help but be affected by persuasively presented statistics concerning the actual state of affairs would surely receive mere ideological effusions of government propagandists with so large a grain of salt as to make their publication a pure waste of time.

Moreover, the so-called "facts," even as presented so cholericly by Ivanov and Sheinis, would probably only *please* an ordinary Soviet Jew: for instance, the statement that Zionists regard themselves as the "defenders" of liberty for the oppressed Jewish people (p. 30); that Israel is open to all Jews who want to go there (p. 54); that the basic aim of Zionism is the creation of a state with three to four million people in it during the lifetime of this generation (p. 45); that the State of Israel is not so isolated as Soviet propagandists pretend, and that not only America and England but also Canada, France, Belgium and others support Israel (p. 56).

For that matter Soviet Jews will not be particularly distressed at learning that Israel gets arms from various countries (pp. 55, 57), or that it produces more electrical equipment and precision instruments than textiles and shoes (p. 95).

None of these "outrages" is likely to upset Jews as such; on the other hand, there can be no doubt that the Soviet authorities have long since given up "winning over" the Jews as a group, if the long-forgotten experiment of colonizing Biro-Bidjan is to be interpreted as such an attempt. Quite apart from the anti-Israel and anti-Zionist point of view which the Kremlin has now resumed in force, the evidence of an increase in anti-Semitism plain and simple has become unmistakable since the last few years of Stalin's life. It is enough to recall the suppression of Yiddish, the consistent discrimination against Judaism as a religion, the systematic exclusion of Jews from Soviet political life, as well as the disguising of Jewish achievements, and the quota system for Jews at universities. What has, perhaps, been even more sinister was the officially sponsored presentation to the Soviet public of Jews in a repulsive guise, as anti-social parasites, sly and unscrupulous self-seekers, embezzlers, swindlers, etc. For more than a year this ancient anti-Semitic stereotype has been published in the form of fictionalized articles which, while not specifying these unsavory creations to be Jews as such, always use names which in Russia are unmistakably Jewish — Rubinstein, Katz, Feinberg, etc. The campaign that was launched six or seven years ago, specifically calling Jews "rootless cosmopolitans," "passportless wanderers," etc., as well as the so-called "Doctors' Plot," can now be seen to have been typical of Soviet life.

THUS IT SEEMS unlikely that the Ivanov-Sheinis booklet is intended for the Jews at all; it is designed primarily as orientation for the Soviet intelligentsia, officials, students, etc., and —perhaps more importantly— as propaganda for the Asian and African coun-

tries, beginning, of course, with the Arabic-speaking countries.

Perhaps the key to this booklet is precisely its studied naive, utterly unanalytic and uncharacteristic praise for the Arab national movement, and the simplemindedness with which it is endorsed lock, stock, and barrel.

The fact is that, for the first time since the early twenties, the Soviet regime began to concentrate its attention on the Arab world, doubtless with the Czech delivery of arms to Egypt. Since then it has had an absolutely unprecedented success, both massive and cheap. For many years Western scholars misled their governments with the preposterous idea that Islamic society was somehow "inherently" anti-Communist, but the Russians, by doing very little, have been able to place themselves in a strategic position *vis-a-vis* the new movements in the Arabic-speaking countries, and by taking more or less passive advantage of Western inability to cope with the local political forces in the Middle East, have maneuvered themselves securely into the prompter's box.

This has come about not through the development of mass Communist Parties in the Arabic-speaking countries — on the contrary, there has been spasmodic repression — but through the collaboration of the Soviet regime as a Big Power with the parvenu Arab rulers.

Just as a conflict between Islam and Communism on the intellectual plane has turned out to be utterly irrelevant to political interaction between the Kremlin and the Moslem leaders, so the contrast between Arab nationalism and the world Communist movement is now seen to be in no way a hindrance to their *de facto* cooperation.

The bookworm approach, reasoning by "logical" categories, which laid it down that the "inherent" incompati-

bility between Communism and Islam as systems of ideas would be decisive in their permanent alienation from each other, has proved to be a disastrous illusion. It has also been a sophomoric illusion, since even if one takes the purely theoretical aspects of Islam and Communism it would be easy to make out a perfectly good case for their mutual accommodation. And on the institutional level it should have seemed obvious, even from a piously Moslem point of view, that insofar as Islamic authority has always rested on the three pillars of centralized state power, the army, and the clergy, the Communists had two-thirds of what was needed, so to speak, in their favor before even starting out.

With respect to nationalism it has proved possible for the Soviet regime, by simply applying to the Arab nationalist movements its perfectly orthodox, indeed old-fashioned, approval of other "colonial" and even "bourgeois" independence movements, to label Arab nationalism "good," and thus justify its sponsorship.

Thus, even before the practical approach—arms deliveries—was tried out, there was at bottom no obstacle at all to the institutional penetration of the Middle East by the Kremlin. It is only to be wondered that the Russians took so long to make up their minds to attempt a breach in this hitherto sequestered Anglo-American sphere of interests. The explanation is doubtless to be found in the premature frustration of the semi-improvised attempt of the *Tudeh* movement to make Persia a "People's Democracy": when the Russians were informed that such an attempt would explosively upset the world balance of power, they simply withdrew, without fuss.

Since then, however, they have developed their own long-range and nuclear weapons on the one hand, and on

the other have found a way of collaborating with the Arab powers that is far simpler than mounting a mass-movement in these backward countries with no appreciable working-class. By loans of capital, commodities, technical personnel, credits, etc., they are in a fine position to jockey the West into the background, and that is, of course, what they have been doing for the past four years.

For what they have secured in return for these really quite cheap barter facilities is a position of extraordinary strategic power.

They have inherited a first-class Trojan Horse—which they did not even have to build. The Trojan Horse is the focal position of Cairo in Africa: quite apart from the steady, rapid spread of Islam throughout Black Africa, Cairo has become a rallying point for Negro nationalists in general, and out of the thousands of Negroes now studying there, the Russians have been making their own selection of elite students and systematically shipping them to Moscow for training.

IT IS THIS, perhaps even more than the gigantic staff Moscow has installed in its Cairo embassy, as well as in all the other Arabic-speaking capitals, that may explain the real influence the Kremlin hopes to exercise in Africa. The continent has been flung open for them by their acquisition of a massive hopping-off and receiving station along the Nile.

Nasser's ambition, as expressed in his *Philosophy of the Revolution* of uniting the Arab world prior to his unification of Africa and then of all 350-400 million Moslems in the world, may rightly be regarded as megalomaniac; but for the Kremlin it has at least this minimum of practical advantage—the fact that Nasser can parade as a bona fide anti-colonialist nationalist *vis-a-vis*

Black Africa, and attract youthful hot-heads to Cairo by the thousands, to be sifted by the Russians in their own search for political material.

For this sort of profit it is well worth promising Nasser, or any other Moslem spokesman, anything his little heart desires. The Russians have not only outflanked the Western politico-economic lines of communication along the Mediterranean, but have established a massive base behind them, an immensely powerful fulcrum for eventually levering the Western powers out of the entire continent of Africa as well as the Middle East.

The Russians, with a minimum of expense and commitment, have realized one of their postwar hopes, suggested to the Western Allies at the peace settlement after the last war—that they be given mandates in Libya and Eritrea to replace the Italians. This proposal, which was turned down by the Allies as a matter of course, has now been compensated for a thousandfold by the organic collaboration between the Kremlin and the new regimes, not in a trackless waste like Libya, or a tenth-rate coaling station like Eritrea, but in Cairo, which after all remains the principal center of Islam as a whole and in any case surely of the Arabic-speaking world. If what the muddleheaded, incompetent Egyptian regime longs for in its search for dramatic distractions is the Aswan Dam, so be it: it is a cheap price to pay for Cairo's unique combination of geographic and cultural centrality.

This perspective is quite enough to explain both the Soviet basic shift against Israel during the past few years, and the arresting contrast between the

ponderous, full-dress "dialectical" dissection of Israel and Zionism in the Ivanov-Sheinis booklet, and the trustful simplemindedness of its treatment of Arab nationalism. The Russians have made a calculation which has proved very tempting to Great Britain and America too: they are backing a bigger horse.

The United States, after all, has also committed itself more or less fundamentally to a coddling of Arab nationalism, but the consistent execution of this policy is hampered by an influential Jewish community, a tradition of humanitarianism, and a sort of petulance at not being able to make the Arab leaders jump through all the pious hoops offered them by Mr. Dulles. The Russians, unencumbered by these impedimenta, have quite coldbloodedly not only made the same calculation but have carried it out.

It is doubtless merely accidental, from the Russian point of view, that Nasser has pounced on the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* as a splendid propaganda weapon: he not only disseminates them, but actually seems to believe in them personally. Despite the tinge of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union, Nasser's elation over the *Protocols* must have been something of a shock to the Russians, who no doubt think the least they can do for their junior partner is to allow him his intellectual pleasures.

But whether or not propaganda of one kind or another is believed in by its makers, the present association between the Soviet Union and Arab nationalism is another demonstration to Jews that history is for them a road paved with cleft sticks.

GEORGE LICHTHEIM is known to readers of *Midstream* from his two previous essays, "The Trouble in Cyprus," and "The Dilemma of Britain." After one year in the United States as Associate Editor of *Commentary*, Mr. Lichtheim is now back in London. In a subsequent issue we hope to give another essay by Mr. Lichtheim dealing with Winston Churchill's attitudes and influence on the Zionist colonization work in Palestine.

Winston Churchill— Sketch for a Portrait

By GEORGE LICHTHEIM

ON NOVEMBER 30, 1954, a number of pressmen and photographers were assembled in Downing Street to record the celebrations attending the Prime Minister's 80th birthday. As the flashbulbs popped, one of the journalists expressed the conventional hope that he might be present at the celebrant's hundredth anniversary. The characteristic reply he got was: "I don't see why you shouldn't, young man; you look quite healthy to me."

Winston Spencer Churchill's long and variegated life has by now impressed itself upon the world's consciousness as something midway between Homeric epic and Rabelaisian fantasy. There is not only the immense span, but the cataclysmic events it has covered, and the apparently boundless vitality of the protagonist. It is after all only a few years since he retired from the public scene, having entered it around 1900 under the patronage of the last surviving giants of the Victorian epoch, only to be at once hurled to the forefront in a succession of roles too numerous to be simultaneously present to the mind: not merely politician,

orator, Cabinet Minister, military strategist (in two world wars), opposition leader, party leader, organizer of victory, architect of the Atlantic Alliance, etc.; but also cavalry lieutenant, participant in almost forgotten colonial wars, press correspondent, escapee from Boer prison camps, young hero of imperialism, middle-aged protagonist of liberalism, diehard opponent of Lenin, Gandhi and the British Labor Party, historian (of two wars), author, painter, bricklayer, aviator, parliamentary gladiator, and *enfant terrible* of the British governing class. Moreover those who have read his two volumes of autobiographical sketches (*My Early Life*, 1930, and *Thoughts and Adventures*, 1932) will be aware that even this long list does not exhaust the principal events of the story. It leaves out of account, for example, the important episode of his service as an infantry officer in France during World War I, after his resignation from the Cabinet over the Gallipoli fiasco: from First Lord of the Admiralty to the stinking trenches and shell-holes of the Western front, and back to the Cabinet, this time as Minister of Munitions, eighteen months

later, to serve under Lloyd George whom he admired—Churchill's life is full of such dramatic turns of fortune's wheel, and he gives the impression of having enjoyed them all.

Mention of Gallipoli, however, recalls an era—roughly coterminous with the inter-war years—when to millions of his countrymen he stood for the most disastrous aspects of an abhorrent past. The bloody failure of the Dardanelles campaign (for which he was quite unfairly blamed and which almost wrecked his career) seemed to epitomize a sustained record of violence and vainglory. That, at any rate, was how liberals and pacifists then saw him. During those years, when a shell-shocked England tried to recover from World War I, thousands would have echoed the words that E. M. Forster put into the mouth of his dead soldier on Achi Baba hill:

Churchill planned this expedition to Gallipoli, where I was killed. He planned the expedition to Antwerp where my brother was killed. Then he said that Labor is not fit to govern. Rolling his eyes for fresh worlds, he saw Egypt, and fearing that peace might be established there, he intervened and prevented it. . . . He is Churchill the Fortunate, ever in office, and clouds of dead heroes attend him. . . .

THE RESENTMENT which then colored the public's recollection of Churchill's role in that first great convulsion was amply fed by his monumental four-volume history of the period (*The World Crisis, 1911-1918*; abridged edition 1931). Here the author displayed, to the roll of stylistic drums, a fascination with warfare that grated harshly on the nerves of many readers. While the war was in progress he had already impressed casual acquaintances with his absorption in the theme of conflict. We owe a revealing pen-portrait to Siegfried Sassoon—poet, pacifist, and in-

fantry officer—who in 1917 visited Churchill at the Ministry of Munitions. They talked of poetry, pacifism, and the horrors of the war. "There came a point, however," Mr. Sassoon has recorded,

. . . when our proceedings developed into a monologue. Pacing the room, with a big cigar in the corner of his mouth, he gave me an emphatic vindication of militarism as an instrument of policy and stimulator of glorious individual achievements, not only in the mechanisms of warfare, but in spheres of social progress. The present war, he asserted, had brought about inventive discoveries which would ameliorate the condition of mankind. For example, there had been immense improvements in sanitation. Transfixed and submissive in my chair, I realized that what had begun as a persuasive confutation of my anti-war convictions was now addressed, in pauseful and perorating prose, to no one in particular.

There are many passages in *The World Crisis*—a work published in 1923-7, when the pacifist wave was at its height—that convey the enthusiasm which war at all times evokes in Churchill. "There can be," he writes, "few purely mental experiences more charged with cold excitement than to follow, almost from minute to minute, the phases of a great naval action from the silent rooms of the Admiralty." And he goes on to contrast "the sense of action at its highest . . . the wrath of battle . . ." with the deadly quiet of the control room. He was then in charge of the Fleet. In World War II, during the Battle of Britain, it was "the few" of the RAF, guarding the Island against the Luftwaffe, who fired his imagination. Everyone recalls his speeches of the period and how they stirred the blood. Few remember the earlier Churchill of World War I, whose dramatic account of the ghastly slaughter on the Western front, the Dardanelles

catastrophe, and the indecisive fleet action at Jutland, seemed to his contemporaries to mark him out as a public man for whom war had an altogether unholy fascination. To Keynes (reviewing *The World Crisis*), it seemed evident that "Mr. Churchill does not dissemble his own delight in the intense experiences of conducting warfare on the grand scale which those can enjoy who make the decisions," though he added "nor . . . does he conceal its awfulness for those who provide the raw material for those delights."

The qualification is in order. Churchill never hesitates to confront the other side of the picture, but he does so casually, and his rhetoric carries him along where other writers simply depict the horror. His magnificent *History of the Second World War* is written in much soberer style than the earlier book, but although the old romantic flamboyancy has given way to an Augustan calm, there is nothing in it to compare for stark realism with the diary notes on the 1940 collapse by his own Chief of Staff, Brooke, then commander of an army corps in France:

Armentières has been very heavily bombed and we are well out of it; half the town is demolished, including the madhouse, and its inmates are now wandering around the country.

These lunatics let loose . . . were the last straw. With catastrophe on all sides, bombarded by rumors of every description, flooded by refugees and a demoralised French army, bombed from a low altitude, and now on top of it all lunatics in brown corduroy suits standing at the side of the road, grinning at one with an inane smile, a flow of saliva running from the corner of their mouths, and dripping noses! Had it not been that by then one's senses were numbed with the magnitude of the catastrophe that surrounded one, the situation would have been unbearable.

(*The Turn of the Tide*, A Study

Based on the Diaries and Autobiographical Notes of Field Marshal Lord Alanbrooke, ed. Arthur Bryant, London, 1957, p. 127.)

Such graphic passages do not occur in Churchill's writings, although he is ready enough to pay tribute to the sufferings of the fighting soldier. When he writes about war it is generally to extol the courage of the participants, or the magnitude of victory and defeat. Here is a characteristic passage from *The World Crisis* on the British army's misfortunes in the Dardanelles campaign of 1915:

The battle was fiercely fought in burning scrub; a sudden and unusual mist hampered the attacking artillery, and although the Anzac (Australian-New Zealand) left gained and held some valuable ground, no general results were achieved. . . . The British losses . . . were heavy and fruitless. On this dark battlefield of fog and flame, Brigadier General Lord Longford . . . and other paladins fell.

"And other paladins." The writer's mind is back in the Hundred Years War, with the Black Prince, Du Guescling, and Joan of Arc. No wonder that even his last work, the *History of the English-Speaking Peoples*, is dominated by warfare. However, to be just, it must be added that *The World Crisis* does contain some passages in which the historian rises to a somber contemplation of what war has done to modern, so-called civilized nations—and be it noted that he is talking of the 1914-18 war, before the age of death camps and atom bombs:

The Great War differed from all ancient wars in the immense power of the combatants and their fearful agencies of destruction, and from all modern wars in the utter ruthlessness with which it was fought. All the horrors of all the ages were brought together, and not only armies but whole populations were thrust into the midst of them. The mighty edu-

cated states involved conceived with reason that their very existence was at stake. Germany, having let Hell loose, kept well in the van of terror; but she was followed, step by step, by the desperate and ultimately avenging nations she had assailed. Every outrage against humanity or international law was repaid by reprisals often on a greater scale and of longer duration. No truce or parley mitigated the strife of armies. The wounded died between the lines: the dead moldered in the soil. Merchant ships and neutral ships and hospital ships were sunk on the seas, and all on board left to their fate, or killed as they swam. Every effort was made to starve whole nations into submission without regard to age or sex. Cities and monuments were smashed by artillery. Bombs from the air were cast down indiscriminately. Poison gas in many forms stifled or seared the soldiers. Liquid fire was projected upon their bodies. Men fell from the air in flames, or were smothered, often slowly, in the dark recesses of the sea. The fighting strength of armies was limited only by the manhood of their countries. Europe and large parts of Asia and Africa became one vast battlefield, on which after years of struggle not armies but nations broke and ran. When all was over, torture and cannibalism were the only two expedients that the civilized, scientific, Christian States had been able to deny themselves: and these were of doubtful utility.

Such passages could almost make one believe that their author was a pacifist—were it not for the undoubted fact that the Second World War aroused in him not merely an iron resolve to win—luckily for the rest of us—but also something bordering perilously close on exhilaration.

YET THERE IS another side to Churchill—one of many. It is part of his charm, and indeed his greatness, that no summary can do justice to his versatility. The critic who immerses him-

self in the more flamboyant chapters of the story is baffled by his subject's Protean ability to transform himself into his opposite. Churchill the warrior-statesman has his counterpart in Churchill the parliamentarian, to say nothing of Churchill the embattled free-trader, foe of militarism and protectionism (1904-1910), social reformer (1906-14), fighter for Irish Home Rule (he was nearly lynched on one occasion by furious Belfast Tories), friend of small nations (off and on), pro-Zionist (always), Francophile, half-American (through his mother), agnostic (discreetly but plainly), and critic of Tory narrowness. Indeed, for some twenty years—from 1904 when he crossed party lines to join the Liberals, until 1924, when he came forward once more under the Conservative banner—the average Tory loathed Churchill with an intensity for which there are few parallels in British politics. What is more, he amply repaid these feelings, though in his case it was more a matter of expressing contempt for the party to which his father had belonged and which, in the general view, had treated Lord Randolph Churchill very shabbily for his great services.

Churchill's relationship to his father is indeed the clue to his own career. There are hints in his autobiography that he is not unaware of this fact, but in his sturdy John Bullish fashion he refuses to enlarge on the subject. The story needs recapitulating only in the briefest outline. Lord Randolph and his friends were "Tory democrats" in the succession of Disraeli, whom they idolized. They did not greatly care for the other Conservative leaders, notably Salisbury, who dominated Tory politics for two decades after Disraeli's death. Nonetheless their rise was dazzlingly swift. In 1886, Lord Randolph, at the ripe age of thirty-six, was Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of

the House of Commons, i.e., the obvious heir to the political throne. So rapid a rise might have turned any man's head; it apparently had a fatal effect on his, for in the following year he rashly challenged his colleagues and at one blow destroyed his own career forever. His subsequent mental collapse suggests an inherent instability which probably manifested itself in his precipitate resignation from office in 1887; but to his contemporaries the case looked somewhat different. In his memoirs, Winston Churchill expresses himself in guarded terms about a family tragedy which clearly had a determining effect on his own outlook:

I can see my father now in a somewhat different light from the days when I wrote his biography. I have long passed the age at which he died. I understand only too plainly the fatal character of his act of resignation. He was the "daring pilot in extremity." That was his hour. But conditions changed with the Unionist victory of 1886. Quiet times were required and political repose. Lord Salisbury represented to the nation what it needed and desired. He settled down heavily to a long steady reign. Naturally he was glad to have the whole power in his own hands, instead of dividing it with a restless rival, entrenched in the leadership of the House of Commons and the control of the public purse. It is never possible for a man to recover his lost position. He may recover another position in the fifties or sixties, but not the one he lost in the thirties or forties. To hold the leadership of a party or nation with dignity and authority requires that the leader's quality and message shall meet not only the need but the mood of both.

It is no coincidence that these words were published at a time (1930) when Churchill was himself out of office and, what was worse, at odds with his colleagues, among whom Stanley Baldwin had begun some years earlier "to settle down heavily to a long steady reign,"

from which Churchill was deliberately excluded when the Conservatives returned to power in 1931. Churchill's contempt for Baldwin, however, is no index to his feelings for Salisbury, a dominating figure who awed the young cavalry officer when he was introduced to him in 1898 (on his way to Cairo to take part in Kitchener's conquest of the Sudan). Nor could he entertain anything but respect for Salisbury's nephew and heir in the leadership of Toryism: Arthur Balfour was one of the ablest men in British politics, though distinctly unfortunate as Prime Minister and destined to lead his party to a catastrophic defeat in 1906. Moreover, his principal colleague, Joseph Chamberlain, stood for everything that young W. S. Churchill then believed in—notably the enlargement of the British Empire. At any rate, when Lord Randolph's son in 1901 delivered his parliamentary maiden speech, there was no more ardent Tory imperialist in the House. Yet within three years he had "crossed the floor" and taken his seat beside Lloyd George—then regarded as a dangerous Radical, and certainly a violent critic of imperial expansion in general and the Boer War in particular.

IN TRYING TO explain this first of many metamorphoses, Churchill is markedly unconvincing. The reasons he gives are many and varied: his father had been a free-trader (in the 1880's this was still compatible with orthodox Toryism), and he himself had lately come under the influence of free-trade arguments that clashed with Chamberlain's tariff policies; he was greatly impressed by the intellectual stature of Asquith, Grey, Morley, and the other Liberal leaders; he had sympathized with the Boers, though regarding their defeat as necessary, and was repelled by the vulgar chauvinism of the Tory rank-and-file (indeed, he later became

a close friend of Louis Botha, the Boer leader who had captured young Churchill in 1899, during the early stage of the fighting). All these explanations are plausible, but they do not quite account for so dramatic a gesture as his public repudiation of Lord Randolph Churchill's party—unless one remembers that the party had once repudiated Lord Randolph. Churchill never says so, but the student of his career cannot help feeling that in "crossing the floor" he was really getting even with the ghost of Salisbury.

At any rate he became a Liberal, and given his combative temperament it was inevitable that he should immediately land on the Radical wing, in the company of Lloyd George. This is the more significant since by upbringing and conviction he was much closer to the "Liberal imperialist" group around Asquith, Haldane and Grey than to the middle-class Radicals and the Laborites on the left wing. His new friends indeed never quite trusted him, and with good cause. They seem to have sensed that he did not really belong in their company, though for some years he did his best to sound like one of them. He certainly went out of his way to madden the Tories by representing them to the voters as the party of reaction and corruption, dispensing "patriotism by the bucketful" while extending "the open hand at the public till," and generally practicing highway robbery. Some of his more strident perorations of those years have become famous; they hardly sound like the later Churchill with whom we are familiar, except for their style. Certainly the abuse he poured on the trade union leaders in 1926, at the time of the abortive General Strike, was equally colorful, and not altogether to the liking of Baldwin and the more moderate Conservatives; nor were his Tory colleagues pleased when in 1931 he described Gandhi as a "naked fakir,"

and his presence in London, to attend the Round Table Conference on India, as a disaster for the British Empire and the civilized world in general.

Was it all play-acting? And if not, where is the strain of consistency in all this extravagance? The first question can be answered firmly in the negative. Churchill always believed what he was saying, at least while he was saying it. He was a naive young Empire worshipper in 1900, an ardent Liberal in 1910, a frenzied anti-Bolshevik in 1920, an admirer of Mussolini (but likewise of Lincoln, Smuts and Clemenceau) in 1930, the leader of his nation against Hitler in 1940, and the *de facto* architect of the Atlantic Alliance in 1950—invariably with the same passion, and quite often for the same reason, or at any rate with the help of the same arguments. These arguments are essentially simple and can be reduced to a few main themes. Chief among them is patriotism, followed at a close remove by devotion to the British Empire (he never got used to the term "Commonwealth"); next comes belief in Anglo-American friendship, and lastly a conviction that Britain and America have in their joint keeping those intangible values which Churchill prizes above all—the rule of law, individual freedom, and parliamentary government (or the American equivalent thereof); to which, if he felt able to do so, he would probably add free trade, a principle to which he has clung with quixotic devotion throughout a long and stormy career (again an inheritance from his father).

If his varied and various utterances are taken as a whole, and set against the background of the countless political battles Churchill has fought for over half a century, a certain underlying consistency does in fact emerge, though at every turn a new theme is added: "Tory democracy" probably sums up the main element of Churchill's politi-

cal outlook where England itself is concerned. His father had been fond of saying "I have never feared the English democracy"—in his day a notable utterance, though based on the quite reasonable certainty that the English working class was fundamentally conservative, and not at all inclined to dispense with aristocratic leadership, let alone join a revolution. Churchill is equally certain that the British people are "sound at heart" and will normally prefer conservatives to radicals. This happens to be true, though it could be phrased in less complimentary language, e.g., by saying that most British people are insular, dislike "foreigners," and do not respond readily to advanced ideas. The Labor Party has in recent years made this discovery, as the Liberals did before. (It is scarcely an accident that the catastrophe of the Liberal Party in the 1918 election coincided with the enfranchisement of masses of unskilled workers and the extension of the vote to women.) In following his father's advice to "trust the people," Churchill has therefore throughout his life placed his bet on what, from the Tory standpoint, is an extremely safe horse. The wonder is that in 1904 he thought it right to gamble on Liberalism; but then the decade before 1914 witnessed a deceptive Liberal revival, already mingled with the first stirrings of Labor as a political force. It is arguable that Churchill at that time abandoned what looked like a sinking ship; certainly the Tories thought so, and it took them long to forgive him.

HERE ONE enters upon the second important strand in Churchill's political makeup. No matter how much he disliked the men who had rejected his father, he would not, in those days of bitter political factionalism, have joined the Liberals had he not shared certain of their attitudes. Free trade has

already been mentioned. "Liberal imperialism"—intellectually and morally superior to the cruder Tory brand—was another important element; the fascination of Lloyd George (and a brief interest in the Webbs and Fabianism), a third; yet all three combined only came to ripen because Churchill was already predisposed toward an attitude which, however much it stood opposed to democratic radicalism, was yet different from traditional Toryism. The secret of Churchill's political and personal career lies in the fact that he does not really belong to either of the two great streams in modern British political life. He has never been a Democrat, though in present-day fashion he has often and eloquently spoken of democracy (by which he means parliamentary government); and he is only doubtfully a Conservative. Even his Liberalism in 1904-14 was not quite of the orthodox Gladstonian brand. The truth is simple: Winston Churchill, in one of his many aspects, is that oddest and most distinctively English of political creatures, a Whig, i.e. by modern standards a throw-back to the 18th century; for in modern times Whiggism has dissolved into middle-class liberalism—something quite alien to Churchill even in the days when he graced a Cabinet predominantly filled with Liberals and over which there still hung the majestic presence of Gladstone.

Now Whiggism is by no means an easy phenomenon to elucidate; it is certainly far more complex and elusive than Toryism. The latter is simply defined: loyalty to Crown and Church, landed possessions, a patriarchal relationship towards one's tenants; dislike of foreigners, Dissenters and Roman Catholics; belief in the Army and the Empire—these sentiments make up a coherent set of attitudes characteristic of that section of the old governing class which traditionally rallied under the

Tory flag. (It has now been displaced by bankers and industrialists barely distinguishable from their Republican counterparts across the Atlantic, but that is another story.) Conversely, there is no difficulty about democratic radicalism, whether it takes the form of the British Labor Party with its quasi-socialist ideology, or its modern American counterparts. Gladstonian liberalism is also comprehensible, though by now distinctly old-fashioned: one has only to think of the late Senator Taft who—to the great amusement of the British—was known as a “conservative” in the United States because he stood for orthodox 19th century liberalism of the strictest observance. By contrast, Whiggery is more difficult to comprehend. For one thing, it is peculiar to England: other countries have produced conservatives and radicals, reactionaries and revolutionaries, but only England has produced Whigs (though the United States once possessed a party which attached this totally unsuited label to itself). For another thing, Whiggism has now disappeared even in England. The last of the *genuine* Whigs vanished from the scene about the time of the first World War. Nonetheless it is possible, though with some reservations, to class Churchill as a modern representative of the Whig tradition, at least in one of his aspects. Such as it is, the tradition cannot possibly survive his departure, even in the attenuated form he has given it. The mold is broken and will never be recast.

What constitutes Whiggism is just what has made Churchill such a puzzle to his contemporaries: the inbred attitude of a ruling oligarchy whose loyalty was solely to parliamentary government as such, coupled with almost total indifference to the precise content of policy or legislation. An aristocracy which governed in opposition to the Tory gentry, most of the clergy, and the

bulk of the country population, was bound to evolve a distinctive cast of mind. A certain contempt for the unlettered country squires who made up the backbone of Toryism went hand in hand with intellectual liberalism, agnosticism, at times even (though not in public) republicanism, or at least an ironical attitude to the Monarchy. The historian of England has no difficulty in showing that the position of this privileged group alone made constitutional opposition to Crown and Church possible during the long, bleak reaction that arose out of the struggle against the French Revolution; so that aristocratic liberalism may be said to have been the real secret of England's immunity to radical revolution in the age which followed, as it was the secret of her greatness as a world power in the preceding era of conflict with monarchical France. At any rate this 18th century tradition (which no other European country shared because none had a parliamentary oligarchy) has left its mark on British history. Among others, it accounts for the fact that the leader of the Tory party in 1940, when Britain was endangered as never before, combined in his person the traditions of an ancient ruling class with an almost completely modern outlook: precisely what other European nations had failed to achieve. For though in continental Europe there have been plenty of liberals, there has never been a ruling class with a liberal outlook and a corresponding ability to understand the modern world. England is unique in having produced an aristocracy that combined political power with genuine attachment to political freedom (which, however, is not the same as democracy). And as the heir of this oligarchy, which for centuries took its unchallenged position completely for granted, Winston Churchill has been able to dazzle two generations of his countrymen—not to

mention the rest of the world—with a sovereign contempt for consistency, and a freedom from inhibition, that only membership of a hereditary ruling class can bestow upon those lucky enough to belong to it. When in 1953, at the age of 79, he offered to take advantage of Stalin's death by going to Moscow, getting acquainted with his successors, and "drinking the Politburo under the table" by way of extracting a lasting political settlement, he was completely in character. The apparent irresponsibility which so appalled the U. S. State Department would not have seemed odd to the brilliant, self-confident and cynical politicians who governed 18th century England and conquered the first British Empire. Where John Foster Dulles was scandalized, Charles James Fox—gambling away a fortune at Brooke's, in the intervals between conducting secret negotiations with the Tsar's emissaries—would have understood and approved.

IT IS THIS Whiggish Churchill—gay, sprightly, debonair, and faintly frivolous—who winks at the reader from the lively pages of his autobiography and its companion volume, *Thoughts and Adventures*. Both books were published in the early 'thirties, when he was out of office, and both reflect the sunset glow of an era already past its zenith but still capable of inspiring nostalgic affection in the reader as well as the author. These writings are Edwardian in tone and to some extent in matter: *My Early Life* ends in 1908, when Churchill—a Cabinet Minister at 34 and the spoiled darling of London society—married a handsome young woman and, in his own words, "lived happily ever afterwards." *Thoughts and Adventures* is less sprightly and more thoughtful—it includes, among others, the famous essay entitled "Shall We All Commit Suicide?" (first published in

1925) which develops a Wellsian vision of ever more devastating wars, and even contains a hint of nuclear terrors to come. ("Might not a bomb no bigger than an orange be found to possess a secret power . . . to blast a township at a stroke?") Clearly the author, even in those days, was in touch with some of the scientific advisers who during World War II dominated his entourage. Yet on the whole he still gives thanks to be alive in the midst of so fascinating an age. If mankind now has the means to blast itself to bits, it has also acquired the ability to solve its most pressing problems. Science, properly employed, can bring about the golden age. What is required is the banishment of war. "Surely if a sense of self-preservation still exists among men, if the will to live resides not merely in individuals or nations but in humanity as a whole, the prevention of the supreme catastrophe ought to be the paramount object of all endeavor." The Churchill of 1925 is a convinced supporter of the League of Nations, a Wellsian progressive, almost a pacifist: all this without ceding an iota of his conviction that the British Empire must hold on to all it has. This was "Liberal imperialist" doctrine in 1910, when the rising young politician sat in the Liberal Cabinet with Asquith and Grey. Since 1925 Churchill has not budged an inch. He is still a Liberal imperialist, convinced that the British Empire serves the cause of peace and freedom, and that its opponents—whether Bolshevik Russians or revengeful pan-Germans—are the enemies of civilization. Thirty years later, on resigning as Prime Minister and withdrawing from public life, he still harps on the same theme, except that Germany is no longer a menace, while the defence of peace and freedom has now devolved on the broad shoulders of the Anglo-American world as a whole (to which

Churchill, in virtue of his half-American background, belongs, so to speak, by right of birth).

If this is not consistency, another term must be found. The truth is that Churchill has been more acutely conscious of the dangers inherent in the 20th century than any other statesman of his time. The gloomy prognostications of the 1925 essay are steadily echoed in his later utterances, though always qualified by a firm belief that, given some degree of commonsense, the world's problems can be solved. What Churchill senses and tries to convey is that we are living in a transitional age, midway between the long Victorian calm and the hypothetical future world order in which the rule of law has at last been established. Yet interwoven with this central theme—representing, as it were, the Whig strand in his make-up—there runs a powerful strain of insular egotism which relates him to the Conservative side of the national tradition. What has happened to the world since the end of the Victorian era is seen as happening above all to England; events and persons are refracted through the idiosyncratic prism of national loyalties. It was England who kept the long peace, England who, in Churchill's own lifetime, twice defended the civilized world against the barbarians. And all at the expense of her own greatness! Churchill never quite knows whether to marvel at the achievement, or to lament its necessity. Quite early in the first volume of *The World Crisis* he introduces this fateful theme:

In the year 1895 I had the privilege, as a young officer, of being invited to lunch with Sir William Harcourt. In the course of a conversation in which I took, I fear, none too modest a share, I asked the question: "What will happen then?" "My dear Winston," replied the old Victorian statesman, "the experiences of a long

life have convinced me that nothing ever happens." Since that moment, as it seems to me, nothing has ever ceased happening. The growth of the great antagonisms abroad was accompanied by the progressive aggravation of party strife at home. The scale on which events have shaped themselves has dwarfed the episodes of the Victorian Era. Its small wars between great nations, its earnest disputes about superficial issues, the high, keen intellectualism of its personages, the sober, frugal, narrow limitations of their action, belong to a vanished period. The smooth river with its eddies and ripples along which we then sailed, seems inconceivably remote from the cataract down which we have been hurled, and the rapids in whose turbulence we are now struggling.

THIS WAS written during the interval between the two world wars, when Britain was still the greatest of the powers, though losing ground on all sides. For an inkling of the gay Edwardian optimism which preceded the catastrophe, one must go to the strictly autobiographical chapters of Churchill's reminiscences—those that come to an end before 1914. The date is important; so is the adjective "gay." The Victorians had been confident enough, but their outlook was solemn and a trifle grim. Pleasure and frivolity were not encouraged. The economist might say that the accumulation of capital was still too important and laborious for energy to be wasted on mere trifles such as the enjoyment of life. Gaiety only came in with the Edwardian era, after the turn of the century, and went out promptly in 1914. There was, so to speak, no prolonged Louis XV age of enjoyment—only a brief interlude between the gloom of the Great Monarch, and the tumbrils. The comparison is inexact—after all, 1914 was not so completely the end of an era as 1789—but it does convey something of the senti-

ment with which Churchill's generation watched the passing of the England they had known—their England.

I gave myself over to the amusements of the London season. In those days English Society still existed in its old form. It was a brilliant and powerful body, with standards of conduct and methods of enforcing them now altogether forgotten. In a very large degree everyone knew everyone else and who they were. The few hundred great families who had governed England for so many generations and had seen her rise to the pinnacle of her glory, were inter-related to an enormous extent by marriage. Everywhere one met friends and kinfolk. The leading figures of Society were in many cases the leading statesmen in Parliament, and also the leading sportsmen on the Turf. Lord Salisbury was accustomed scrupulously to avoid calling a Cabinet when there was racing at Newmarket, and the House of Commons made a practice of adjourning for the Derby. In those days the glittering parties at Landsdowne House, Devonshire House or Stafford House comprised all the elements which made a gay and splendid social circle in close relation to the business of Parliament, the hierarchies of the Army and Navy, and the policy of the State. Now Landsdowne House and Devonshire House have been turned into hotels, flats and restaurants; and Stafford House has become the ugliest and stupidest museum in the world, in whose faded saloons (sic) Socialist Governments drearily dispense the public hospitality.

The date is 1896, viewed from the vantage-point of 1930 (worse was to come, but the author, fortunately for his peace of mind, did not know this). The world he describes is that of Henry James—a brilliant but fragile structure, uneasily poised between aristocratic past and democratic future. Already before 1914 uncontrollable forces were on the march, forces long dormant un-

der the elegant surface of late Victorian and Edwardian society. The grandeur of Landsdowne House was to be shattered, and much else besides. What is remarkable is that the young lieutenant who drank in the splendid scene in 1896—himself by right of birth a member of the ruling oligarchy whose glory he was destined to share—should have successfully weathered the transition to the age of mass democracy, total war, and global organization.

There are, of course, those who maintain that in this achievement he was greatly helped by a certain underlying lack of fixed principles—what, for example, gave him the right, with his aristocratic background, to join Lloyd George in his campaign against the great landed fortunes? The answer perhaps is that by this time he had become a professional politician, relying for his income on writings and lecture tours, and thus in a sense living on his wits. (He had virtually no money of his own, and for years supported himself by journalism.) But the true explanation has to do with the character of British public life, which for all its archaic rules and customs left plenty of scope for new forces then emerging. The apparent rigidity of the system was social rather than political. Radicals and labor leaders were excluded from Society, but not from power. In consequence they never developed an appetite for violent revolution, or indeed an aptitude for it. Lloyd George might be ostracized by London hostesses, but he continued to sit in the Cabinet and confiscate the property of their husbands. And though the solitary Labor leader who joined the Liberal Cabinet in 1906 was an exceedingly tame figure, his inclusion in the magic circle suggested the shape of things to come. The governing oligarchy had never ceased to broaden its base, and it was now once more active trying to

tap fresh sources of popular support.

All this was in the Whig tradition—more doubtfully also in that of “Tory democracy”—and Churchill played the traditional game with all the enthusiasm of a newcomer. He never really abandoned it. The Russian Revolution for some years dislodged him from his basic Whiggery and turned him into an aggressive opponent of Labor—he even mistook poor Ramsay MacDonald for a Bolshevik in disguise—but before long he had reverted to his old central position. When the test came in 1940, the Labor Party made it plain that no other Conservative was acceptable to them as Prime Minister, and during the war his old General Strike opponent, Ernest Bevin, became not only a colleague but virtually an ally against the rest of the Cabinet—Tories and Socialists alike.

THE FACT is that British public life acts as a solvent of antagonisms which elsewhere have a way of hardening into rigid enmities. Before 1914 politics was in fact a game, though it was ceasing to be one—the Irish issue in that year almost brought the parliamentary machine to a standstill. After 1918 the rise of Labor introduced a new factor, and for some years it looked as though the constitutional framework might be seriously strained. But the General Strike of 1926 fizzled out amidst nation-wide church prayers for reconciliation, there was no real violence, and even the prolonged mass unemployment of the thirties did not cause serious unrest (partly because prices were falling, and everyone but the unemployed was slightly better off). In a society whose internal cohesion had never been seriously threatened, it was possible for Parliament to remain the focus of the national life, though the standard of debate tended to decline.

Churchill himself is evidently in two minds about the impact of mass democracy upon parliamentary government. In 1930 he remarked, *à propos* of the election campaign of 1900 which first introduced him to the voters:

I must explain that in those days we had a real political democracy led by a hierarchy of statesmen, and not a fluid mass distracted by newspapers. There was a structure in which statesmen, electors and the press all played their part. . . . Inside the meeting we were all surprised at Mr. [Joseph] Chamberlain's restraint. . . . He spoke for an hour: but what pleased the audience most was that, having made a mistake in some fact or figure to the prejudice of his opponents, he went back and corrected it, observing that he must not be unfair. All this was before the liquefaction of the British political system had set in.

The reference to “a real political democracy” is at least in part misleading, unless one notes the qualifying phrase “led by a hierarchy of statesmen.” Churchill has always equated democracy with parliamentary government, and parliament with oligarchy, though naturally an elected oligarchy. This is Whiggism, and the antithesis of genuine democracy. Yet Churchill is right in holding that the old British system of government has disappeared. Parliamentary debates no longer decide important issues—they are settled beforehand in the Cabinet and in the party caucus, where the real discussions nowadays take place. Partly in consequence, public interest in Parliament has declined, as has the intellectual level of debate. Precisely because he is not hampered by belief in democracy, Churchill has been able to say all these things, as the leaders of the Labor Party have not. The system still works, for the same reason that the Monarchy remains acceptable to the British—institutions have a way of outlasting their

real usefulness and acquiring a kind of symbolic meaning instead. But there is no question that the old system of government by a parliamentary oligarchy, which genuinely *debated* public issues, is dead. It has in fact gone the way of the Empire which it was designed to uphold. The modern synthesis of democracy and bureaucracy which has taken its place is in many ways more efficient, and also more humane, but it is not parliamentary government in the traditional sense, and it provides no training-ground for future Churchills. (Not that there is much prospect of another such personality sprouting from the soil of the Welfare State.)

These considerations reinforce the sense—now widely shared among his countrymen—that Churchill is the last great figure in modern British political history. The impression is probably well-founded. Greatness does not develop independently of circumstances; it needs a wider horizon than present-day England can supply. Churchill, however, has impressed himself upon the consciousness of his age not simply as one of its great men, but as the paradoxical embodiment of traits which normally do not go together. In one of his aspects he is a political coelacanth, a pre-historic monster fished up from the depths of the past (thus he appears to British left-wingers, who are nonetheless secretly proud of him). At the same time he has managed to appear as an ultra-modern organizer of the managerial age: not merely equipped with all the latest technical and scientific wheezes (he usually had some prominent scientist in his entourage), but actually possessed of a scientific cast of mind: indifferent to tradition, impatient of routine, full of Wellsian visions of progress, resolved to streamline the ancient British organism, ready to work with American politicians or Soviet commissars, and finally able to

wipe the floor with Hitler. The contradiction is perhaps no more puzzling than the circumstance that this greatest of parliamentary debaters of the old school can, at the drop of a hat, transform himself into the most effective of popular orators, able to hold a mass audience spellbound for hours with a torrential flow of robust humor and picturesque abuse of political opponents.

Perhaps all this amounts to no more than the trite adage that genius is many-sided. Certainly there has never been anyone quite like Winston Spencer Churchill. It is to be feared that there never will be again. England is becoming too small a stage for actors of his caliber; or it may be that there is something about the impersonality of modern life which discourages the almost tropical growth of eccentricity so marked in the society in which Churchill had his roots. For in the end he is an intensely national figure, the most John Bullish of modern British statesmen, but John Bull in a flying suit and equipped with the latest electronic devices. Strange that one man should in the end have managed to span the transition from the Victorian age to our time, and even stranger that it should have been a descendant of the Duke of Marlborough. Now that the story is nearing its close, the originality of the protagonist stands out more strikingly perhaps than it did for his earlier contemporaries. Here at least is someone who towers above his age; a pity he has left no successors.

FINALLY, what of Churchill the writer, or more generally the man of ideas, the stylist, and—so far as it is possible to class him with that select fraternity—the political thinker?

It is well known that his general education was spotty. At school he was considered a dunce, and by his own account never managed to memorize a

word of Greek or more than a few scraps of Latin; nor was his French ever really fluent, as his war-time radio audiences discovered. In mathematics he only managed to pass the examination barrier with the help of a crammer, and thereafter promptly forgot what he had learned. History he enjoyed, but we know from his account in *My Early Life* that he had not read either Gibbon or Macaulay until he was twenty-two and, as a cavalry officer in India, found himself with leisure hours to fill. He then, for the first time in his life, developed a zest for reading, and for two successive winters tried to close the yawning gaps in his education. Philosophy, history, science—it all came as a complete revelation to him:

From November to May, I read for four or five hours every day history and philosophy. Plato's *Republic*—it appeared he was for all practical purposes the same as Socrates; the Politics of Aristotle . . . ; Schopenhauer on Pessimism; Malthus on Population; Darwin's Origin of Species; all interspersed with other books of lesser standing. It was a curious education. . . . I now began for the first time to envy those young cubs at the university who had fine scholars to tell them what was what; professors who had devoted their lives to mastering and focusing ideas in every branch of learning; who were eager to distribute the treasures they had gathered before they were overtaken by the night. But now I pity undergraduates when I see what frivolous lives many of them lead in the midst of precious fleeting opportunity. After all, a man's Life must be nailed to a cross either of Thought or Action. Without work there is no play.

On the whole he liked Gibbon and Macaulay best. They were the two authors whom he read and re-read, and their abiding influence is solidly imprinted in his own style.

All through the long glistening mid-

dle hours of the Indian day, from when we quitted stables till the evening shadows proclaimed the hour of Polo, I devoured Gibbon. I rode triumphantly through it from end to end, and enjoyed it all. I scribbled all my opinions on the margins of the pages, and very soon found myself a vehement partisan of the author against the disparagements of his pompous-pious editor. I was not even estranged by his naughty footnotes. . . . From Gibbon I went to Macaulay. . . . I accepted all Macaulay wrote as gospel, and I grieved to read his harsh judgements upon the Great Duke of Marlborough. There was no one at hand to tell me that this historian with his captivating style and devastating self-confidence was the prince of literary rogues, who always preferred the tale to the truth, and smirched or glorified great men, and garbled documents according as they affected his drama. . . . Still I must admit an immense debt.

Neither Gibbon nor Macaulay of course fits the Tory tradition, and the author's artless confession in this chapter really amounts to telling the reader that his mind was permanently influenced by the two leading historians of the Whig school. To these influences he later added Burke—another Whig, whose speeches during the American War have provided countless schoolboys with convenient epigrams for use on the liberal side of every argument, just as his later writings on the French Revolution gave substance to Toryism. It is significant that when Churchill in 1904 left the Conservatives he used as an argument their failure to conciliate the defeated Boer Republics in the Burkean spirit of magnanimity towards the vanquished—always a favorite Churchillian theme.

Meanwhile what of his general philosophical and religious convictions? Of religion we are told that during those months when as a young man he was busy gobbling up knowledge, "I passed through a violent and aggressive

anti-religious phase which, had it lasted, might easily have made me a nuisance." The phase was ended, it seems, by a tacit agreement with himself that he would believe as much as suited him. For the rest he had always gone to church, "and at Harrow there were three services every Sunday, besides morning and evening prayers throughout the week. All this was very good. I accumulated in those years so fine a surplus in the Bank of Observance that I have been drawing confidently on it ever since. Weddings, christenings, and funerals have brought in a steady annual income, and I have never made too close enquiries about the state of my account. It might well be that I should find an overdraft." Gibbon's mockery is plainly audible in this casual passage which no genuine Tory would have penned, let alone published; so is the characteristic Whig frivolity—a blend of skepticism and amused disdain for the foolish multitude. Churchill is a very 18th century character.

THERE is a similar quality in his political thought, which is intensely realistic and almost exclusively concerned with power—especially British power. Yet it differs strikingly from what the Germans used to call *Realpolitik*—by which they meant freedom from general ideas, and concentration on material factors alone. Churchill is never cynical when he talks about war, and he is quite clear in his mind that Britain survived two world wars only because she stood for certain general principles which were in harmony with the needs of the age, and the interests of other nations. His imperialism is genuinely liberal—another inheritance from the Whig era. The Whigs conducted the series of wars against the France of Louis XIV in the name of religious and political freedom, and

Churchill is convinced that they were right in doing so. His monumental biography of his famous ancestor, John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, who captained the Allied armies in that struggle, is heavily weighted against the Tories—then the party of peace with France abroad and royal absolutism at home. He also makes it clear that, although Marlborough belonged to neither faction, he skillfully used both to keep himself in the saddle during the long war against Louis XIV, which of course is precisely what Churchill did when the time came for him to rally his nation against Hitler.

It may be noteworthy that Gibbon has gradually prevailed over Macaulay in Churchill's later writings—the 18th century asserting itself against the 19th. In *The World Crisis* his style is frequently flamboyant and not free from rodomontade. The massive biography of Marlborough also provided an occasion for Macaulayesque rhetoric, since here he was travelling over terrain already explored by the historian of the English Revolution, and deliberately pitting his own interpretation against that of Macaulay. The battle pieces in particular are full of purple passages:

Sombre reflections held the mind of Fénelon's pupil, and gnawing anxiety. Here was the army of France, at whose head he had been marching a few hours before, short of ammunition and in increasing disorder, locked in deadly grapple with an enemy whose strength seemed inexhaustible, whose numbers were growing every minute, and whose confident aggression proclaimed the presence and the genius of Marlborough and Eugene. This was the battle which he, heir to the crown of France, had been sent forth to win. War, yesterday the jaunty boon-companion, now glared upon him with lineaments of fury, hate and doom. Where was Vendôme? Where was that brutal, bestial, but nonetheless tremendous warrior, who had been

placed at his side to win him military glory, whose advice he could lean upon, whose decisions in the end he had been directed to obey? The Marshal was in the cauldron, fighting hand to hand, organizing and reorganizing attacks, sending messages which were incomprehensible and orders which were obsolete by the time they arrived. The one thing the Great King had always forbidden, and which Burgundy had above all others resolved to avoid—namely, an infantry battle in closed and broken country—was now burning away the grand army of France. Such is the chastisement of those who presume to gain by easy favor and pretence the glories which the gods reserve for their chosen heroes.

Compare this melodramatic and slightly absurd pathos with the glacial calm of the opening chapter of *The Second World War*:

Germany only paid, or was only able to pay, the indemnities later extorted because the United States was profusely lending money to Europe, and especially to her. In fact, during the three years 1926 to 1929 the United States was receiving back in the form of debt installment indemnities from all quarters about one-fifth of the money which she was lending to Germany with no hope of repayment. However, everybody seemed pleased and appeared to think this might go on forever.

History will characterize all these transactions as insane. They helped to breed both the martial curse and the "economic blizzard" of which more later. Germany now borrowed in all directions, swallowing greedily every credit which was lavishly offered her. Misguided sentiment about aiding the vanquished nation, coupled with a profitable rate of interest on these loans, led British investors to participate, though on a much smaller scale than those of the United States. Thus Germany gained the two thousand million sterling in loans, as against the one thousand million of indemnities which she paid in one form or another by sur-

render of capital assets and *valuta* in foreign countries, or by juggling with the enormous American loans. All this is a sad story of complicated idiocy in the making of which much toil and virtue was consumed.

The tone of this, as of the succeeding chapters in *The Second World War*, is consciously Augustan—dispassionate, reflective, and only occasionally lit by flashes of scorn. Churchill has finally reached maturity—only to discover that what suits his ripe taste best is the marmoreal calm of his favorite 18th century authors. Intellectually, too, there is no advance beyond the tried and tested categories of the Whig tradition. Wars are made by "nations," whose leaders are either sagacious or unreasonable, and in the latter case morally wicked as well. Ideologies have no meaning for Churchill. Bolshevism to him was a savage aberration—now happily on the way out, thanks to that realist, Stalin—while as for National Socialism, who could possibly take this farrago of nonsense seriously, or suppose that the Germans themselves believed in it?

ALL OF THIS may not seem like a very heavy mental equipment, and indeed Churchill would at no time in his career have qualified as a systematic thinker on any subject other than British history. He showed, however, a remarkable capacity for absorbing both factual knowledge and general ideas, chiefly by listening to people and gradually widening the circle of his acquaintances, until it included such improbable figures as Lloyd George, Mrs. Beatrice Webb, and Professor Frederick Lindemann, a well-known physicist who, during World War II became the chief of Churchill's scientific brain-trust and something like a grey eminence behind the scenes. In other directions, too, there was constant ex-

pansion of professional competence, so much so that for some years in the middle twenties Churchill, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, was chiefly identified with matters like the Gold Standard and the Balance of Trade. If his management of the nation's finances caused Keynes to deplore "the economic consequences of Mr. Churchill" as a disaster comparable only to the Treaty of Versailles, at least it provided fresh evidence that he literally shrank from nothing.

When one also recalls that, in the midst of all this, during the General Strike of 1926, he amused himself by editing the official British Gazette—all other newspapers had been shut down—in which he poured floods of abuse upon the strikers and their leaders, it must be admitted that there has rarely been a moment during the half century, starting from about 1900, when Winston Churchill did not provide the British public with something to gasp over their morning newspapers. He himself is quite aware of this aspect

of his career, and has indicated more than once that every moment of it—including the twenty or so election campaigns in which he was personally involved—contributed greatly to his own enjoyment and the entertainment of all concerned.

There is something so outsize about all this—the span of his life, its fantastic ups and downs, the magnitude of the issues involved, the imprint upon the world of his own larger-than-life personality—that one shrinks from a summing-up. No biographer is likely to be able to do justice to Churchill, and this despite the fact that he is basically not a complex character. It is simply that, having lived so long, enjoyed himself so enormously in so many roles, and taken so large a share in shaping events, it has become impossible to write his story without taking in huge chunks of impersonal reality as well. All the same, it is to be hoped that someone will one day try his hand at it. The result should be fascinating. Meanwhile the wonder remains.



The Letter

By YOSSEL BIRSTEIN

THE LETTER to Uncle came back unopened, with the notation in blue on the envelope: "Deceased."

Uncle was an old man, and he lived together with Aunt in the rooms behind their grocery in a small, sandy street in one of the poor neighborhoods of Tel Aviv. They had no children, but they lived frugally, rarely eating a square meal. When I arrived in the country, they cleared a small room for me to live in. The other relatives weren't happy about my living with the old couple. They suspected me of having come there to wait for the inheritance. From them I learned that Uncle had built a large apartment house in the center of town and left one apartment empty.

"He'll never move in there," one of them told me, "because he thinks that when he does he'll die. He wants the apartment to remain empty and waiting, as we are, for his death."

This was Michel, related on Aunt's side. They were all Aunt's relations. I was the only member of Uncle's family to survive the war. Evenings, they frequently gathered at his home and discussed politics and money, and tried to guess the value of the house they would inherit. Uncle, tall, husky, and with an oversized head, rarely participated in these discussions. When he did, he would incline his huge head towards his right shoulder to indicate that he did not think very much of them. He always rested his head on his shoulder this way during conversations with people he did not respect.

Uncle did not mind their talking so openly about the inheritance. "That's just what he wants," Michel explained to me. "He's sure that the more anxious we are the longer he'll live."

Michel was nervous, and constantly poked about in his ear with his finger, or plucked stiff hairs from his nose.

I lived in the dark room, and used to listen to my uncle puttering about, or to my gaunt, shrivelled aunt, who, when there was no one in the store, would sit on a low chair memorizing the customers' debts to the tune of some prayer melody.

Once I worked hard clearing the yard of the cases, cans and other junk so that I would be able to use the rear entrance. When Uncle saw me, he said nothing. But when I came home that evening, the yard and the rear entrance were as cluttered as before. Uncle didn't like change.

YOSSEL BIRSTEIN, a native of Poland, lived in Australia for twelve years before settling in Kibbutz Gvat about nine years ago. He writes in Yiddish. This story was translated from a Hebrew version that appeared in the Israel daily, *Ha'aretz*, by Moshe Kohn.

The next day I met one of the family in the street, who took me to the apartment house. His name was Nahum. He was a bachelor, with a blue birthmark covering half his cheek, and he was constantly blowing his nose, burying his whole face in the huge colored handkerchief.

"You think he really has something to blow there?" Uncle once told me. "He only does it to cover that spot for a while." Uncle never laughed or even smiled.

On the way to the house Nahum told me the family was sure I was waiting around for the inheritance, and that I was doing fine with Uncle. "Why do you think he lets you live there and feeds you? Do you think he's suddenly become generous? It isn't enough for him that we're waiting. He needs someone right beside him all the time to reassure himself that he's going to live long. You'll never get away from him now."

Nahum had a heavy, nasal voice. He suffered from a chronic cold, and what Uncle had said about him wasn't true. He did have something in his nose to blow.

I BEGAN to shun the relatives, and no longer joined them when they came in the evening. But I would hear their conversations through the thin walls of my room. They liked to argue and make bets. One evening alone I counted fifteen bets: whether snakes preferred moisture to dryness; whether the main entrance of the city park was on the western or southern side of town; whether the containers in which a certain candy was packed were second-hand and the candy fresh or the candy was stale and the containers were new. Their talk would filter into my thoughts. At night I would dream about it, and in the morning disconnected words and sentences still floated in my mind like the leftovers of last night's party.

Uncle noticed my estrangement and wasn't pleased about it. Once, when I brought a girl home, Aunt followed us to the threshold and stood there. "Her name is Mira," I said, but Aunt just stood there looking curiously. Later, Uncle brought in a stale bread which he hadn't been able to sell and a bottle of seltzer, so that I would have something to offer my guest.

It was at this time that I decided to leave Uncle. When the relations learned that I was going to a kibbutz they laughed, and Uncle didn't believe that such a place existed at all. He had lived in the country for many years, and he had "known" all along that a kibbutz was only a figment of the imagination. But when I packed my things, he came into the room and asked where I was off to.

"Kibbutz."

"But there is no such thing."

"I've been to one and seen it."

But Uncle insisted that a kibbutz simply did not exist.

He had no beard and his face was yellow and pitted like brick. His lower lip jutted out as though he had no upper teeth, and when he spoke he swallowed his words. One always had to try hard to catch what he was saying.

"You're my brother's son and you're going to live among strangers?"

Slowly, like a ship at sea shifting course, he turned his huge head to me and continued:

"Listen, you once brought a girl here. Take her and move into the empty apartment. I'm giving it to you." Just as slowly he turned his head back. I noticed his large, florid ear, which was overgrown with twisted gray hair, suggesting the mouth of an ancient cave.

WHEN MY LETTER to Uncle came back I went into town to find out what had happened.

I came to the sandy street, which was known as "Rehov Hadarom," and I saw that the shutters of the store were open, and above, on the wall, hung the same black-lettered sign: GROCERY. Beneath this was Uncle's name, Mendel Cooper, followed by the number 7.

There was no one in the store, but when I went into the dark room in which they lived, I saw Uncle holding a pot in his hand, ready to pour into a plate the broth he had apparently cooked for Aunt, who lay sick in bed. He held the pot at a slight tilt by one handle, and an old, well-worn melancholy exuded from the utensils, from the frugal broth, and from Uncle. He and Aunt rarely spoke to each other, and he used to regard her as one does an old shoe.

"It's I," I murmured. It was a while before he recognized me and offered me two limp fingers.

"How are you?" he asked, and then wanted to know whether I had come back alone and where my things were.

Standing there in the room I suddenly knew that Uncle had been waiting all along for me to come back, and he might himself have written that notation on the envelope to bring me back. Of course he had. I felt deceived and insulted. I will give the letter back to him, I mused, and be off.

Actually, I had already grown used to the idea that he was dead, and had pictured him lying supine in bed, his body more massive in death than it had been in life: mouth open a bit, eyes also open but no longer blue—glassy and stupid. The face stubbled with the aftergrowth of death. He lay there hands folded, huge stomach moving no more. Aunt sat beside him on the low chair, completely withdrawn into herself, every so often letting out a wail. But in death he ignored her outcries as he had done in life.

Now I had to readjust myself to his living face.

"You're a kibbutznik?" he asked, leaning his head toward his right shoulder.

I took out the envelope and handed it to him. I had to explain twice before he caught my meaning, and even then he did not fully understand what I was driving at. He took out the letter, impatiently read it, stuffed it back into the envelope, his hands trembling.

"What is this?" he asked again. Again I slowly expained everything.

"Who wrote on the envelope?"

"I don't know. The post office, I guess."

"You sent this letter?" he asked suspiciously.

"Yes."

"Why did you write?"

I saw that he didn't believe me and suspected me of having played some trick on him by adding the notation on the envelope myself. It had never occurred to me that he would suspect me.

Suddenly Aunt, quick as a kitten, leaped from her bed, seized the envelope and read. Then she looked up at us, gestured with her hands as if she were about to let us in on some great secret, and said: "Sh-h. Don't tell a soul. No one must know."

Aunt did not return to bed. She dressed and began to putter about in the store. Uncle sat down on the chair and did not stir. After a while he replaced the letter in his pocket, put on the neater of his robes, and went outside. I entered the dark room where I had lived before. Nothing had changed: the stripped bed; the table with the green oil cloth; the bare shelf nailed to the wall. Beyond the window the yard was strewn with cases. I was tired, and I lay down to rest.

IT WAS dark when Aunt woke me to eat. Uncle was back, sitting at the table in a white shirt, freshly shaved, the tips of his huge ears blushing in the light. The room was brighter than usual, and the table was set. Aunt served the hot soup, and Uncle filled the glasses with wine. Aunt didn't give me a chance to wonder about the festive meal in mid-week, but kept urging me to eat: this wasn't all; there would also be meat and compote and cake. Uncle was in an expansive, voluble mood, and wanted to know what I was doing. I said I worked with the cattle in the kibbutz.

"Do you milk?" he asked.

"Yes."

"A woman's trade. Why aren't you doing something fit for a man?"

Nobody mentioned the letter, and they treated me as lavishly as if they needed me to testify in their behalf.

The shutters of the store were closed. The meal was served slowly, and when Michel and his wife dropped in, they were startled. But Aunt soothed them: "It's nothing. It's nothing. The poor boy came famished from the kibbutz and there happened to be some bones to cook." Uncle paid no attention, not even greeting them. He went on munching the meat, as old folks do, and poured himself another glass of wine.

They said nothing about my staying longer when I left the next morning, and I did not hear from them for a long time. Then one afternoon Nahum, the one with the birthmark, came to visit me. I saw him coming up the wide path to the cowshed where I worked, and here too, amid the sprawling meadows and far off mountains, he walked with the lonely gait of one walking down a blind alley.

He didn't want me to ask about him. Times had changed, and he had decided to look me up and see how I was living. It was not for him that times had changed; he was still the same bachelor waiting for the inheritance. Times had changed for Uncle. He reported that the old folks

no longer lived in the dark rooms behind the store, but had moved into the new apartment in the large house and hired someone to tend the store. They took a walk to the beach every day, went to the movies at night, and Uncle had bought himself a bookcaseful of books. When the relatives called he served them fresh bread and sweet cocoa. They didn't know what had come over the old folks. They had heard something about a letter which Uncle had received, and that he was often going to the post office on some business. Nahum was anxious to learn if I knew anything about it. Actually, that was why he had come. Nahum still blew his nose constantly into the colored handkerchief, burying his whole face in it. I saw that Uncle had been right; Nahum had nothing to blow.

LATE THAT summer I went to town, and took the opportunity to call on Uncle. I walked up the flight of stairs and knocked on the door, but no one answered. From a neighbor I learned that the old couple had moved out several weeks ago and that the apartment again stood empty.

I went to the sandy street with the grocery store. Uncle stood bent over a pile of loaves of bread on the floor. He was trying to lift several of them at once, but his large robe opened and some of the loaves rubbed against his perspiring body. He put them down, closed the robe, and as he bent he held the lapels of the robe with his chin so that it should not open again, but to no avail. The robe had no buttons, and as he carried the loaves he pressed them to his bare chest.

He recognized me, and after freeing a hand he offered me two limp fingers.

"I've been waiting for you," he said.

I was thirsty and wanted some water. He called into the dark room for Aunt to bring a glass. No one answered, and he went in.

It was the same old store: shelves of canned food, a barrel of herring, beans, potatoes, flour, and around an open container of candy green flies frolicked.

Uncle came out fully dressed. He waited for me to quench my thirst and asked me to come with him.

"Where?"

"It won't take long," he said. As we left the store Aunt emerged from the room and gazed after us in awe.

We rode to the center of town, and then to an outlying neighborhood. Uncle was silent all the time. Only after we had gotten off the bus, and reached a narrow street, he wanted me to read the street sign.

"Rehov Hadarom," I read.

So there was another street by this name, I thought.

He led me to house number 7. Above the shutters of a store was the name: "M. Cooper."

Uncle took a letter from his pocket and handed it to me. I recognized the envelope.

"Read." He winked at me.

I read the notation: "Deceased."

"I found out all about it," Uncle said. "I asked at the post office and found out everything. I didn't die—that one did."

Suddenly he laughed. It was the first time I had heard Uncle laugh: the short, whooping laugh of old people.

"A mistake. They made a mistake," he repeated, to make certain that I understood, and his massive head slowly tilted, like a sinking ship.

Free of Motion

By THOMAS FITZSIMMONS

Purple cats and pink sea-otters
Make a man stop and think;

I knew a cat who always said
Whatever thinks must sink;

Then there's the pressing matter of
Circles that won't complete;

Not to mention the presence here
Of gods who have no feet.

Given a pause to contemplate
The prevalence of wishes,

It's clear that trees know much of this
While men are caught in niches.

It's also plain that if you stop
You have not hurried on,

And if you've stopped and thought and wished
You're there but also gone.

Were I to wish that cats were pink
And otters purple always,

That gods be footed and circles round
And men as wild as waves,

I surely would be left in peace
With quantities of trees,

Be present, thoughtful, free of motion,
Yet somewhat ill at ease.

HOWARD FAST, whose essay "A Matter of Validity" appeared in the Spring 1958 issue of *Midstream*, is internationally known as a novelist. Praised for many years in the Soviet press, he has of late been savagely attacked in it after he broke with the Communist movement.

The Ordeal of Boris Pasternak

By HOWARD FAST

IN THE INCIDENT of Boris Pasternak and the Nobel Prize, a good many people have implied that a particular attitude toward books and writers is singular to the Soviet Union. I don't think that one can discuss the Pasternak affair intelligently, unless we begin by recalling that fear and hatred of independent thought is a quality of tyranny as old as tyranny itself. That takes us back a long time. There were Kings in ancient Israel who felt about the prophets very much as Mr. Khrushchev feels about Boris Pasternak.

What distinguishes the Soviet leadership in this case is the unprecedented boorishness and vulgarity of their reaction. Mr. Khrushchev is by no means the only dictator around; and in this instance, as they watched his antics, I can imagine the smile upon the faces of Franco and Nasser and Mao, to mention only a few. "We would do it so much better," they must have grinned to themselves.

But more important than the manner is the event itself. If one desires only the solace of indignation, one can equate the Soviet Union with Nazi Germany, and draw a simple conclusion. However, this would be much too

simple to be correct, and the equation is unreal and impossible. Those who remember the American reaction to the Nazi defamation and indictment of such writers as Thomas Mann, Lion Feuchtwanger and Arnold Zweig, will recall that the disgust and horror felt in America took the form of the hard anger of decent people confronted with the ultimate indecency. We were then beginning to understand Hitlerism: the systematic destruction of art and artists was a key part of an announced and carefully-planned degradation of an entire culture. Brutishness and racism openly confronted and challenged humanism; a Thomas Mann who continued to live in Nazi Germany would have invited our contempt.

Therefore, for those who desire to temper their sense of outrage with a thoughtfulness that goes below the surface, the case of *Doctor Zhivago* becomes an extraordinary and puzzling phenomenon. Just as Boris Pasternak, standing in such simple and wonderful dignity, and seemingly so alone, cannot possibly know the international support, sympathy, admiration and love which he has evoked, so we, on our part, are barred from any reliable knowledge of how the Russian intel-

lectuals and the people of Russia feel about what has happened to him.

In replying to Joseph Alsop, who directed his fire toward Soviet writers as the major villains in the Pasternak affair, the *New Leader* made a very acute comment.

"Alsop bases his condemnation of Soviet writers," the *New Leader* said, "on interviews with two of them last summer by a German correspondent. One, Ilya Ehrenburg, was evasive about Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*; the other, Alexei Surkov, attacked it. Alsop contrasts this with the courage of the Polish writers in congratulating Pasternak on his being awarded the Nobel Prize.

"We submit the comparison is false. The head of the Polish Writer's Union is Antoni Slonimski, a noted liberal as well as a fine poet. The head of the Soviet Writers Union is the aforementioned Surkov, a Party doctrinaire who occupies about the same place in Soviet letters that William F. Buckley Jr. does on the U.S. scene. Controlling the central apparatus of the Writers Union, Surkov made it appear—to superficial observers—that the Russian writers condemned Pasternak. Actually, even *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, reporting the union's resolution of censure, said it took place after 'hot' discussion, in which Pasternak was attacked by Surkov, Boris Polevoy, and a handful of other Stalinist mediocrities. To date, Pasternak has not been criticized, however, by such Soviet writers as Mikhail Sholokhov, Margarita Aliger, Veniamin Kaverin, Vladimir Dudintsev, Konstantin Fedin—or any of the names that count."

THE ABOVE becomes particularly important when we attempt to set the Pasternak affair against a backdrop, not of the boorish, ignorant and philistine Communist Party leadership, but of Soviet society itself, a thing easily con-

demned and less easily comprehended. I note in passing my own personal reaction to the techniques of Soviet leadership; as the Pasternak business began to unfold, I was filled with a sense of disgust and anger; I saw a land degraded and afraid and turned away from any aspect of light or civilization.

But very soon I realized how deeply subjective this reaction was, for I had missed the central fact—that Boris Pasternak remained alive and unmolested and free, in the sense that he was not imprisoned and had the right, if he desired to exercise it, to leave Russia. And the reason for this was obviously neither our good offices nor indignation, but rather the support of a great many people within Russia itself.

In other words, the senseless and uncivilized fury of the Soviet bureaucracy at the award of a Nobel Prize to Boris Pasternak was based on weakness rather than strength, on fear and uncertainty. They lost their collective temper and went into an insane frenzy, with the whole world watching; and people and nations who indulge in this sort of hysteria are armed with neither security nor sanity.

A great many people wondered why the Russian leadership resorted to this kind of hooliganism. Insensitivity, ignorance, boorishness—these words describe without explaining. Certainly political considerations enter into a Nobel Prize award; this is neither new nor enlightening, any more than the fact that political considerations govern the award of the Lenin Prize. All international awards are to an extent affected by political considerations, for all international relationships are essentially political. Neither does any critic I have spoken to believe for a moment that it is necessarily the greatest writers who win prizes. The very concept of "greatness" in the world of art and literature is misleading. One

has only to examine the list of Nobel Prize winners through the years to realize this. In more than half the cases, the passing years temper and alter judgments.

All of which makes the Russian attitude even more puzzling, as Mr. Nehru, the Prime Minister of India, admitted, when he commented that he was at a loss to understand the "bitterness and scorn" that was being heaped upon Boris Pasternak by the Soviet leaders. Naturally, I have no access to facts denied to Mr. Nehru, but perhaps through an examination of the book itself, we can arrive at some interesting speculations.

NO BOOK is great in itself. All art is a product of the life and reality within which it is produced, and its prime importance is always judged within that reality. Its secondary or historical importance is an after-judgment by later generations; and while some say that this later judgment is more valid than contemporary opinion, this point is debatable. As a novelist, I have occasionally been asked what importance I think my own books will have a hundred years from now. My answer is that I neither know nor care; I write for today.

I would guess that Boris Pasternak might say the same, and I feel it is incumbent upon critics to judge his book as of today, as of the time and circumstances which surround its writing and publication. It appears at a time when the world literary scene is as sterile and unexciting as at any time I can remember, a time when mediocrity flourishes, when synthetic violence is everywhere a substitute for passion, and where the old-fashioned notion that a writer of novels should have style and grace in the language of his choice is fallen into utter disrepute.

More than that, it appears in a so-

ciety which for a generation has strangled every impulse toward invention and imagination on the part of its writers, a society whose literary product is above all else dull and tedious. The Russian novel of pre-Soviet times has usually been highly introspective and concerned with the deeper motivations of human beings. The usual Soviet novel is awkwardly Victorian in approach to human motivation, and rarely more than surface-deep. When it attempts introspection in a land where modern psychiatry is severely hampered, if not forbidden, it is as gauche and obvious as a type of writing in our own land known as "teen-age" fiction. Within this framework, novels of depth and human validity stand out strongly. There have been very few such books, and aside from *Doctor Zhivago*, the only one I would mention readily is Sholokhov's *The Quiet Don*. It is worth noting that for years Sholokhov was bitterly and consistently criticized in the Soviet Union.

I don't like the word "great." It is absolute and overworked to meaninglessness. I would say that *Doctor Zhivago* is an extraordinary book, sensitive, thoughtful, written with craft and grace, and very moving. It is also a work of courage on the part of a very gentle and courageous man.

Constructed in the classic Russian (and French) manner, it develops the lives and fortunes of a group of Russians and their relations to and with each other. The time of the major part of the book is from 1914 to 1923: World War I, the Russian Revolution, and the Civil War which followed. The protagonist of the book is Doctor Zhivago, a product of the Russian upper middle class, a deeply sensitive and rather neurotic young man. Doctor Zhivago is more neutral than partisan, a judge of the struggle rather than a force within it, a witness to sufficient

events of key importance for Pasternak to create, through him, a fine panoramic picture of those terrible years.

Perhaps the major weakness of the book is that Pasternak is less interested in *Zhivago* than in the events *Zhivago* is witness to, and therefore the intermittent aloofness of *Zhivago* tends to become disconcerting and, at times, almost unbelievable. That there were many *Zhivagos* is beyond dispute; but his very lack of partisanship lessens him, even as an observer. Yet as he is, he is necessary to Pasternak's purpose—an investigation of three types of approved mass murder—national war, revolution, and civil war. Thus, in the evening of his life, Boris Pasternak, through the eyes of an army doctor named *Zhivago*, looks back upon a decade of turmoil and slaughter and finds it not only bestial and evil, but productive of nothing which he can equate with the toll paid in human life and suffering.

I believe that this is essentially what has so enraged the Soviet bureaucracy. Not Pasternak's devastating portraits of commissars, not his descriptions of the cruelties practiced by both sides during the Civil War—for neither of these are new to Soviet literature—but his total repudiation of armed struggle as a necessary stage in human progress. I am inclined to think that the Soviets would have tolerated other elements of the book which surely affronted them—Pasternak's mysticism, his Christian utopianism, his treatment of sex and love. These would have been criticized, but in a far more restrained manner. His touchstone of danger lay in his implacable attitude toward war, regardless of the circumstances, justice or injustice of the war.

IN THE LIGHT of this, we can reach some interesting conclusions about Russia today. The Soviet Union has

scored some important propaganda victories which have been based upon what it submits as its own consistent record of seeking peace. "We want peace and we work for it," the Russians say, not only to the world but to their own population. But the fact of the matter is that the Soviet foreign policy is a power policy—directly opposed to the admitted power policies of Britain, France and the United States. Since we live in a world where colonies and foreign interests of the great powers exist, the power policy of Russia will most often support some national interest of a colonial country—as Africa and the Near East have demonstrated. Where Israel is concerned, a spurious fabric of "international Zionism" is manufactured to cover a contradiction in policy. In the case of Hungary, the rationale was weak and without substance; the use of power was quite naked.

Obviously, no people lives easily with such a policy. Even as millions of Americans expressed their annoyance with Dulles' policy of "brinkmanship" at the November elections, so must there be a similar trend of thinking, a similar weariness of living, year in and year out, under the threat of atomic destruction in the Soviet Union. It is not unreasonable to think that millions of Russians, like millions of Americans, have come to the conclusion that righteousness directed toward world destruction is empty, brutal and unsupportable. In other words, all of us live in a time when a single fact is being driven home among the entire company of mankind—that war is bad. There is no good war, no necessary war, no just war. War is unmitigated evil.

The foregoing is the credo of Boris Pasternak; and the cruelty of the jest is that this credo has been recognized as a most pressing danger to that coun-

try which speaks constantly and endlessly of its desire for peace.

I realize that many people are reluctant to accept such an explanation. Not only is there a certain indulgent comfort in thinking of Russia as a simple *whole*, but a great many more people have seized upon the fact that Boris Pasternak is a Jew, and have come to the quick conclusion that the Soviet reaction is a part of a general anti-Semitic outlook. Such an explanation simply does not hold water.

There is no doubt as to the existence of wide-spread anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union. In the last years of Stalin it spread like a cancer, and since the death of Stalin we have seen more than one expression of it on the part of Soviet leadership. In the time of Stalin, it led to the total destruction of Jewish culture, the end of Jewish theatre, writing and publishing; and since then, not one single, concrete step to revive any element of Jewish culture has been taken. The brutal execution of almost every Yiddish writer of standing in the Soviet Union under Stalin is still unexplained by Soviet authority—indeed, these murders have not even been officially admitted. Nor have any steps been taken to halt the spread of anti-Semitism among the more ignorant and brutalized elements of Soviet society.

But we must remember that all through this period of horror, there were Jews and Jews, even as there are today. Soviet anti-Semitism is not racial, in the sense that Nazi anti-Semitism was. There has never been any suggestion in Russia that the millions of Russians with one Jewish parent or grandparent, who have left Judaism completely, should be stigmatized and segregated. Quite to the contrary, the core of the Russian drive against the Jews is assimilationist.

Even in his last years, when his

hatred of the Jews was most virulent, Stalin instituted no actions against such writers as Ehrenburg and Grossman, who were Jews simply by descent. It is told, on quite good authority, that Boris Polevoy—now playing the utterly ignominious role of running-mate to the contemptible Surkov and the petty clerks of the *Literary Gazette*, is also Jewish—as is Boris Izakov of the foreign department of the Writers Union, who wrote to me that he would gladly volunteer to take up arms with Egypt against Israel.

So we are faced with no general policy, except that which is directed against Yiddish writers and Yiddish culture. Otherwise there are Jews in favor and Jews out of favor, Jews enlisted in the cause of ignorance and philistinism and Jews opposing it. (Of course, I talk about writers only. In other fields the situation is different.)

Now, Boris Pasternak is of Jewish descent, that is, both his mother and father were Jewish; but his point of view as a writer is that of a devout Christian of the Orthodox faith, and though I have never heard that he was baptized into this faith, his book would lead me to believe that he was. I have no quarrel with his personal approach to Christianity; I believe unreservedly that every human being has the absolute and inalienable right to whatever religion or philosophy he chooses to espouse. When I read a writer such as Pasternak, a Christian mystic in his point of view, I attempt to measure his work in terms of his subjectivity rather than my own; for there is an almost boundless area of humanism where many faiths and philosophies meet. But when such a writer sits in judgment over my own role as a Jew and treads upon my own sensibilities as a Jew, then I believe I have every right to annoyance and a duty to criticize.

THIS IS PRECISELY what Boris Pasternak has done in *Doctor Zhivago*. For me, an irritating part of his book is his attitude toward Jews, as expressed by the author; not that he lacks sympathy or pity for the plight of the Jew in the situation he describes, but he sees the Jew from his own philosophical position, and to Zhivago (for which I must read Pasternak) the sole function of the Jews as a people was to produce Christ and Christianity. From this standpoint the present-day Jew defies and contradicts both history and the progress of man by remaining a Jew. While Zhivago comprehends this point of view, Pasternak, through another character, expresses it explicitly, when he has Gordon, a friend of Zhivago's say:

"Come to your senses, [addressed to Jews in general] stop. Don't hold on to your identity. Don't stick together, disperse. Be with all the rest. You are the first and best Christians in the world. You are the very thing against which you have been turned by the worst and weakest among you."

Needless to say, I am not going to argue this position here, for I have refuted it for years in my own writing; and it has been dealt with by people better-equipped than I. It is neither a profound nor original position; and leaving out the Christian association, it expresses most succinctly the official Soviet position on the Jews. At the same time, I am not going to deny Pasternak the right to this kind of thinking simply because he is of Jewish descent—any more than I would deny it to a Christian writer. I do not agree with it; politically, I will fight it, but as the outlook of a novelist, I must examine it within the framework of the novel, and though I feel that it weakens the book, it is of a piece with the book.

In other words, I can see no reason for people to feel that the vicious attack directed against this book stems either from the fact that Pasternak is of Jewish descent or from the attitude toward Jews expressed by the author.

WHAT IS EXPRESSED by the author and feared by the Soviet bureaucrats is his indictment of a military period which they have canonized. My own generation of youth, bitter, robbed of any other hope, accepted that canonization, and many of us dedicated our lives to a struggle that used us up and left us, in our middle age, soulsick and angry with the shattering of the Soviet illusion. For many of us, there is a deep and terrible echo in Doctor Zhivago's conclusion—that there are better ways for man to confront history than with war and slaughter and bestiality, no matter in what cause or rationale.

Since the present generation of American youth never accepted the Soviet canonization of "just war," they are little affected by the recent history of events in the Soviet Union; but for the Soviet youth, it is another case entirely.

They are a generation born and raised in the war years; in their childhood, they were witness to the frightful toll that World War II exacted from the Russian people. At the same time, the very circumstances of the period prevented their indoctrination with the "Soviet ideology." They grew to young manhood in the maniacal reaction of Stalin's last years, and they saw this "materialist" god blasted and degraded before their own eyes. They witnessed the invasion of Hungary by their righteous bureaucrats, and they began to comprehend, in terms of their own excellent education, the pathological ignorance of their so-called "Marxist leadership."

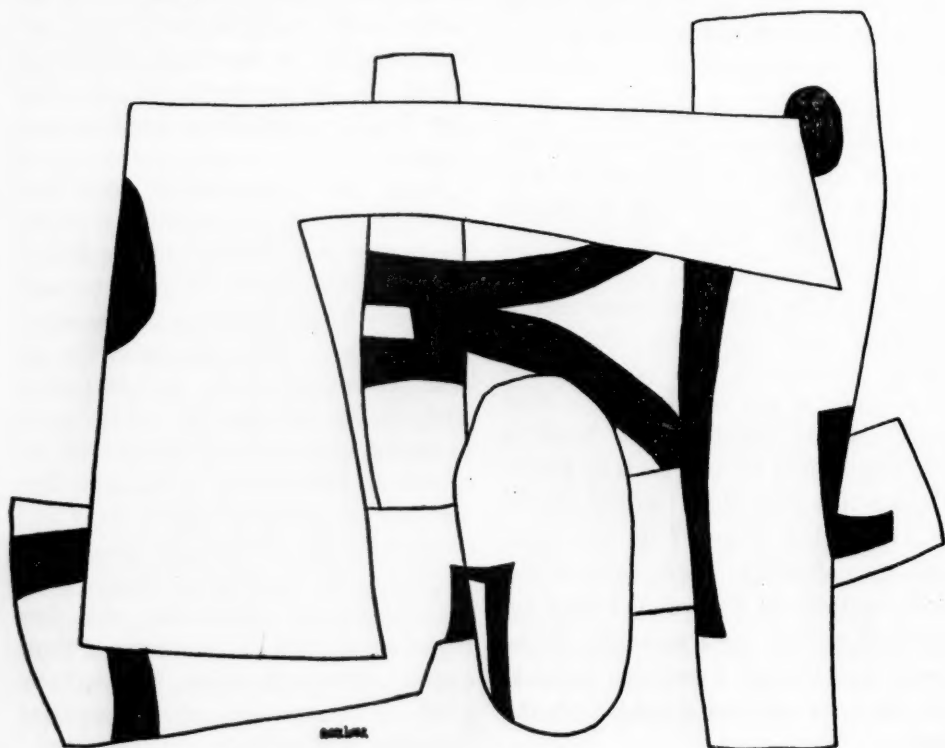
They are a strange and new generation indeed, and every contact we have had with them bears out the fact that they are restless, angry and curiously open-minded. In other words, they are a very large problem to a bureaucracy of small talent and great ignorance—a bureaucracy which has many large problems.

It is this group, students, young intellectuals and professionals, and with them a good many older intellectuals, who would have, in my opinion, seized upon Boris Pasternak's book as a sort of Bible. It has a romantic-mystical quality that is strongly appealing to youth and is notably absent in Russian literature today. Given half a chance, it might have had unprecedented readership in these circles, and unquestionably it would have acted as a catalyst for thought and discussion. More than that it would hardly have accomplished, for it is a myth that books can move masses of people into action. The most

any book can do in such a situation is to clarify a direction and answer questions.

However, the nerves of the Khrushchev clique are not good; their responses to things like this are hysterical and self-destructive; and considering the damage they have done to themselves in the eyes of the Western world, and their own intellectuals as well, they have probably hurt themselves more than would have been the case had a million copies of Pasternak's book been distributed within Russia.

The world was shocked by an unprecedented display of bad manners, poor taste, and filthy language directed toward a brave and talented writer. But bad propaganda by a nation is not simply the error of bad propagandists; it is a reflection of an internal situation; and though Boris Pasternak stands before the world like a lonely and tragic giant, it may be taken for granted that he does not stand alone.



A Prayer For My Father While He Is Still Alive

By JASCHA KESSLER

He himself suffering and starved
He did not rain bread on me
In ignorance begat me
Cursed each way each way enslaved

Unborn my mother killed him
As my wife loves me now
And I beget children now
In silence like his so damned

Denying not nor affirmed
Father such deaths as men live
In pain continue to live
Unconsoled unreformed

Blood consumed secluded heart
Who fought joys calloused by love
Who thought forgiving true love
Forgive me my love you feared

And believe your ravaged breast
And forget our chains of hope
And reconcile without hope
And reside restless at peace

And For Mother

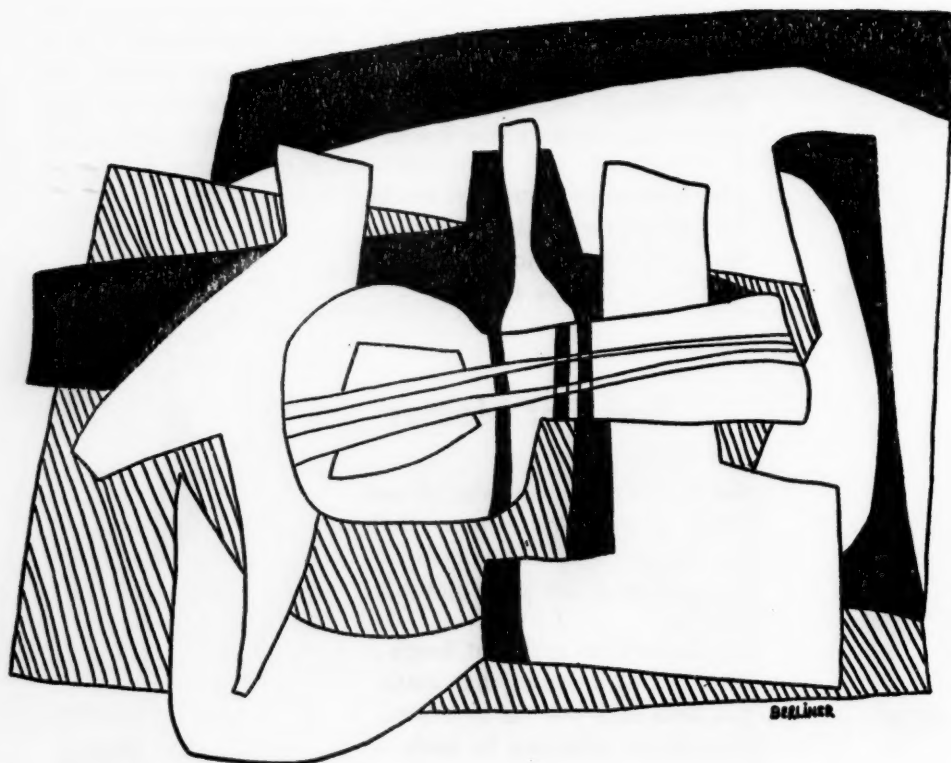
She sorrowed because she pleased
While spring gave no more than sons
Her terrors born at her breast
Lost pursuing her poor moons

She wanted no wish but love's
Betrayed by trusting that truth
His flesh hers now in us moves
Perfections unknown by both

She was strong without wisdom
Her sons would take light from God
Mirrors that folly lives in
Returning horrors for good

She fought hard but we broke her
For we proved human as stones
Her fouled thighs tremble in fear
And we shall preserve her ruins

She knew no bliss but pain's way
Though hate bonds too like love's vow
Love brings all strangers all joys
Neither love nor hate we know



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Reflections on Ahad Ha'am

By EZRA SPICEHANDLER

OF ALL THE Jewish thinkers of the last century only Ahad Ha'am has retained a significant degree of relevance for our generation. Nachman Krochmal, Hermann Cohen, Abraham Geiger and even Samson Raphael Hirsch may have been profounder thinkers than he; yet each has been relegated to the limbo of the library and the classroom while Ahad Ha'am's thought still directly influences contemporary Jewish thinking, both in Israel and (in its Reconstructionist revision) in America. Why have so many of his ideas survived? After all, most of the social facts and many of the theoretical presuppositions upon which he organized them no longer prevail. He wrote his articles for the emerging bourgeois-intellectual of the Eastern European community: that community no longer exists. His theoretical hypotheses were grounded in Spencerian biologism and the positivism of nineteenth century French sociology: these schools of thought have long since been superseded.

Baruch Kurzweil, a leading Israeli literary critic, set off an angry controversy a few years ago when he contended that Ahad Ha'am wears well because of his beguiling style and his appeal to

"half-educated European externs* and their Israeli heirs." On the other hand, here in America, Mordecai Kaplan has exuberantly asserted that Ahad Ha'am was "the one person in Jewish history who, next to Maimonides, deserved the title of the guide to the perplexed." The celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of his birth is a fitting occasion to re-examine Ahad Ha'amism and to try to explain its remarkable durability.

Despite the vast changes wrought by half a century of Jewish life, the central problem with which Ahad Ha'am dealt remains the problem of the Jewry of our generation. To a great degree it is the modern reformulation of the recurring dialectic between particularism and universalism which since the days of the Second Commonwealth has been crucial for the history of Judaism. With the Emancipation the late-medieval trend to particularism was abruptly halted. The prevalent universalism of the Enlightenment became the watch-

* Externs were special students who had no academic status but who were granted their degree if they passed rigorous examinations in required subjects. Because of numerous *clausus* most Russian Jewish students were externs. Soon the term came to connote the external half-baked Jewish student of the East European milieu.

word of the liberated and quickly rising Jewish bourgeoisies, not only in France and Germany where they first emerged, but also in Eastern Europe. However, with the *fin de siècle* reaction, which originated in Western Europe (Bismarck) but soon spread also into Russia (the post-Alexandrian reaction of the 1880's), the pendulum swung back in the direction of particularism, taking the form of Zionist and folk nationalism. Zionist ideas, it is true, occur before the eighties and nineties (witness Hess, Smolenskin and others), but Zionism the mass movement developed as a consequence of the disenchantment of the Jewish middle-classes with liberalism. It must be said that many enlightened European Zionists did not despair of the ideals of European Enlightenment; they despaired only of the possibility of genuine emancipation for the Jews. For them Zionism was a political device whereby they hoped to obtain "auto-emancipation," the title which Pinsker gave his famous tract. Nordau and Herzl projected a bastion of European culture on the banks of the Jordan. Ahad Ha'am's devastating attack upon the "un-Jewish" liberal bourgeois state which Herzl projected in *Altneuland* points up this particular trend. Among some Zionists, on the other hand, a dangerous particularism developed. Hess had made use of much of the paraphernalia of racist mythology; blood, physiognomy, race. In Eastern Europe, Moses Lilienblum, in a schizoid admixture of pride and despair, declared the Jews to be an Asiatic people. By the 1880's it had become clear to many that a new synthesis must be established between these particularist and universalist trends.

The synthesis which the Age of Enlightenment had provided was by now disrupted. Moses Mendelssohn had posited a formula which "protestant-

ized" Judaism (I use the term in Max Weber's sense). By isolating religion—more correctly, certain religious beliefs and practices—Mendelssohn was able to detach whole areas of political, social and cultural experience from the realm of Judaism. German, French, and British Jewry, whether orthodox or liberal, seized upon this program. The Eastern European *maskillim* followed suit. Judah Leib Gordon proclaimed the slogan of the late Russian *Haskallah*: "Be a man in public and a Jew in your tent." This program had now failed. Gentile society would not permit this cultural dualism. Perhaps, at an earlier stage, the total assimilation of Jews might have been accepted, but by the turn of the century the new racism made this solution impossible. For his part the enlightened Jew was beset by his own problem. Mendelssohn had indeed staked out an area where the Jew could retain his identity: his religion (in Mendelssohn's case, orthodox Judaism). But what happens when the modern Jew no longer believes in religion itself? Can his "Jewishness" be maintained along merely negative lines: a Jew being merely one who does not profess Christianity?

Ahad Ha'am often refers to the attempt of French and German Jews to hold on to their Judaism by proclaiming vague liberal generalities. With his skillful surgeon's scalpel he reveals the meaninglessness of such religiosity. For all their precious verbiage about "mission" and "religion," the German Reform movement, insofar as many of its smug congregants were concerned, was hardly more than an expression of middle-class euphoria.

WHEN HALACHIC—that is, talmudic Judaism—broke down, the very delicate problem of Jewish historical unity and continuity became crucial. The Tradition provided the mythos of

a uniform and continuous historical experience and a clear-cut program as well as a definition for Judaism. The secession from Orthodoxy now destroyed both the mythos and the program. A German Reform Jew, for example, might claim he was a Jew by religion only; but the religion he practiced was only vaguely connected with the religion of an Eastern European *Hasid* or *Mitnaged*. Those Jews who were able to accept even a radically circumscribed Judaism could hardly maintain the fiction of the religious connection. Although they actually remained part of the Jewish group, they were theoretically excluded from Judaism. Nor was their connection with the Jewish group always a result of Gentile rejection. True, the theological ends posited by traditional Judaism had lost all meaning for them; nevertheless they found deep significance in the familiar folkways, the mannerisms no less than the ethical mores of Jewry. Thus a new definition of Judaism became necessary in order to include these elements in the body of Israel. What was needed was an organic system which could include both traditional and westernized, totally secularized Jews—a system which could explain the historical connection between them and previous Jewish generations, and also provide a program and a mythos for contemporary Jewry.

Ahad Ha'am was the first Jewish thinker to attempt such a non-theological interpretation of Judaism. Krochmal before him, it is true, had emphasized the role of the nation in Judaism, and Geiger had likewise laid great stress on the prophetic-ethical ideal. But both had put God—or, at all events, a "God-idea"—in the center of their system. Now Ahad Ha'am, in accord with his positivist orientation, proposed a Judaism grounded on a nationalist-humanist base. Ethical nationalism rather than God or a "God-

idea" becomes, in his view, the animating and directing force not only for his generation but for all of Jewish history.

In a short essay entitled "Between the Sacred and the Profane" (1892), Ahad Ha'am uses a figure which epitomizes his approach to the problem of Judaism.

"Among those features which distinguish the sacred from the profane we come across an interesting phenomenon. In matters secular, the end endears the means to its realization only to the extent that it requires them. Once the end ceases to exist, the means automatically disappear. Not so in matters sacred. The sacred end endows its means with a sanctity of their own. If the end disappears, the means seek out other ends to which to attach themselves. In other words, in matters secular the shell is preserved for the benefit of the fruit. Once the fruit is consumed we dispose of the shell. But in matters sacred the shell itself has become sanctified and can never be thrown away. If the fruit has been consumed or has decayed, we create a new fruit for the shell."

The synthesis which Ahad Ha'am proposed was based on a new emphasis upon the third element of the Jewish triune: "God, Torah and Israel are one." Under the banner of "cultural nationalism," believer and non-believer could unite. By redefining Judaism in ethical and cultural terms Ahad Ha'am deviated from the tradition but did so within the area of tradition's experience. No one can deny the place that ethics, the folk, custom, language, love of Zion had maintained in traditional Judaism. I do not believe that he underestimated the past role of religion or of God in Jewish history. What he did was to minimize them in a secularized age. The resulting structure was imposing. It saved—and still saves—for Judaism thousands of its ablest sons.

"Formerly every Jew thought that a true Jew was one who believed in perfect faith in the cardinal principles of the Jewish religion and who faithfully performed all its *mitzvot*. . . . Even the Haskalah generation maintained this position. . . . Now, however, the matter has changed. Thousands of Jews have returned to their people for nationalist reasons and yet have not returned to the Jewish religion." ("National Morality," 160.)*

IN SOME respects the problems Ahad Ha'am faced were similar to those faced half a century earlier by Auguste Comte, the founder of French positivism. Indeed, the intellectual biography of Ahad Ha'am, son of a bourgeois-hasidic family, has some interesting affinities to that of Comte, a scion of a middle-class Royalist-Catholic home. I say this with all the necessary reservations which immediately come to mind when one tries to compare Skvira and Odessa to Montpellier and Paris.

The breakdown of society brought on by the triumph of the French Revolution created a crisis of belief for the second generation of the Revolution. The excesses of the Revolution, the social anarchy and moral nihilism which came in its wake, frightened the rising bourgeoisie desperately seeking to stabilize its newly won position. What seemed to be the ethical and political failure of the Revolution put into question the individualistic liberalism of the Enlightenment which Rousseau had so popularized. The medieval Catholic framework of society was indeed shattered. But now the conservatism of the middle-classes demanded the stability of the old society. These demands found expression in the persistent effort to maintain the ethics of

a *weltanschauung* discredited by history.

There is no doubt that Comte's positivism was an attempt to substitute a new framework in which the societal structure could be rebuilt. The remarkable fact is that while the framework he provided was new, its superstructure bore a startling resemblance to the old Catholic morality. Thomas Huxley was quite correct when he asserted, "Positivism was Catholicism minus Christianity." In place of God of the theological period and the "essence" of the metaphysical stage, Comte now placed society and humanity at the pinnacle of his positivist structure. This he did by carefully circumscribing the sphere of human thought to the world of positive sciences. Those realms which could not be empirically understood he relegated to the area of pre-scientific myth.

Like Comte, Ahad Ha'am represented a bourgeois reaction to a revolutionary cultural upheaval. He, too, supplied a synthetic framework which enabled the post-Haskalah Jewish intellectual to preserve his social balance. The earlier Haskalah had been devastating in its iconoclasm: "For many years," he wrote, "our literature had fought for enlightenment. It boldly trampled upon the *sancta* of our people. It mocked our customs and our mores." ("Man at Home," p. 48.)

The disillusionment with the Haskalah was a result of a two-fold experience: the shock at the Gentile rejection of all Jews, the enlightened together with the obscurantists, during the pogroms of the eighties; and the anguished emptiness of the "in-between" generation caused by the loss of faith in Judaism and in progress itself. In a rare semi-lyrical moment Ahad Ha'am described the ambivalent mood of the post-pogrom Jewish intellectual:

"Even now, as the Sabbath ends—after sunset but before one may light

* All references are to Ahad Ha'am's *Collected Works* in the single volume Dvir edition. The translations are my own.

the lamp—I love to sit in the dark and meditate. I feel as if my soul rises heavenward and the *neshama yetera* departs from me. Within me various boyhood memories reawaken, foolish memories, sweet memories. At times my lips unconsciously break into a familiar Aramaic song. The melody sets my bones atremble with ecstasy and fills my eyes with tears. . . . Of a long January evening, as I sit in the goodly company of *Maskilim* playing cards at a green table, suddenly (I do not know how or why) I see before me an old crippled table laden with torn and patched-up tomes. I see myself poring over them, alone, in the light of a dull candle, my eyes never tiring of their thin letters, my soul never sated with their deep wisdom. I forget jacks and queens . . . my eyes sparkle, my face shines. Weird words and expressions pour forth from my lips." ("Timeworn Writings," p. 115.)

Ahad Ha'am provided the new middle-class Jew with a new framework in which to reconstruct the old Jewish ethics and mores. He found this framework in the prevalent positivism of the *fin de siècle*.

UNLIKE COMTE, whose education and milieu placed him in the center of the nineteenth century intellectual world, Ahad Ha'am had no pretensions to create a world-embracing philosophy. His main concern was to demonstrate that the values of Judaism, which he and his coterie of intellectuals felt to be true, could be fitted into the framework of European thought. The only originality in his own thought can be found in the skillful appropriation and adaptation of the prevalent positivist views to Jewish problems. In doing so he remained true to the tradition of Jewish thought, both medieval and modern, which by and large has been synthetic rather than original. My con-

tention regarding the general homiletical quality of Ahad Ha'am's thought can best be demonstrated through his interesting, if somewhat naïve, treatment of Nietzsche in his article, "A Transvaluation of Values." Here Ahad Ha'am, abandoning his positivist position, attempts to write a homily whose burden is to prove that in some modified way there are Nietzschean elements in Judaism. But Ahad Ha'am was not a Nietzschean (as Kaufmann Kohler erroneously concluded), nor indeed was he primarily a positivist. He was first and last an apologist for Judaism. To be sure, as a cautious thinker he did not usually fall into the homiletical trap as in the Nietzsche article. He remained more or less consistent with his positivist position. The late Dr. Joseph Heller, however, has brilliantly demonstrated that his positivism was "tactical" and never prevented him from resorting to quasi-idealistic absolutes when his intuited truths demanded their use.

Yechezkel Kaufmann was among the first to call attention to this flaw in Ahad Ha'am's system. In a number of articles he pointed out the inconsistency of using a positivist vocabulary while simultaneously resorting to concepts such as "absolute morality" and the "spirit of Judaism." Kaufmann endeavored to explain this contradiction in thought by ascribing the biological-positivistic view to the earlier Ahad Ha'am and the idealistic views to the later Ahad Ha'am. He argued that Ahad Ha'am's "positivism" ultimately led him into a blind alley. Biological explanations such as "the will to live" were no justification for the continuance of Judaism in the modern world. After all, many great nations also had possessed a will to live but nevertheless perished. An ultimate, idealistic reason had to be given to justify Jewish survival. Ahad Ha'am was therefore compelled to forsake his position and posit

the prophetic absolute ethic, the "Spirit of Judaism," as the *raison d'être* for Jewish historical continuity. However, Dr. Heller has, I believe, demonstrated that this chronological distinction simply does not fit the facts. Even in his earlier works Ahad Ha'am resorted to idealistic concepts, albeit less frequently than later. But it seems to me that Dr. Heller's analysis did not go far enough. Ahad Ha'am's recourse to ultimates and absolutes was not as unsystematic as appears at first sight. The contradiction in his system is characteristic of the general development of late French positivism and has its roots in Comte himself. Certainly Comte's preoccupation with "humanity" and his development of a "religion of humanity" (priesthood and all!), indicate that even the father of positivism was compelled to abandon the early utilitarian avoidance of ultimates. In place of the presupposition of random ends he is forced into a voluntaristic view of society. Emile Durkheim, Comte's profoundest disciple, allows his later works to follow a similar direction. Ahad Ha'am therefore was, so to speak, quite consistent in this inconsistency. His "deviation" might be explained as either the logical development of his late positivistic orientation or as a result of his being directly influenced by the late French positivists whom he frequently quotes, including Durkheim himself.

AHAD HA'AM's humanism had to be expressed in ethical nationalist terms. In the first place, the social situation in Russia precluded the integration of the new Jew in Russian society. The pogroms of the early 1880's dramatically underlined this fact. Moreover, the nationalistic reaction, particularly in Germany and in France, cast the once seemingly successful Western European assimilation under a pall of doubt. Then, too, the density of pop-

ulation coupled with the strong folk-feeling of the Eastern European Jewish community, so different from the small dispersed communities of pre-emancipation Germany and France, required the formulation of the new Judaism in more nationalistic terms. Finally, the Europe of the *fin de siècle* was not the Europe of the Enlightenment. Nationalism was the prevalent ideology.

All these factors go to explain the difference between Comte's and Ahad Ha'am's formulation. The cosmopolitan Frenchman, a member of a "normal" national group, speaks in terms of society and of community. Ahad Ha'am, a member of an emerging and persecuted nationality, considered community and society to be practically synonymous with nation. We would, however, be misreading his doctrine if we forget that for Ahad Ha'am the nation was the concrete embodiment of humanity. Jewish nationalism was for him the particular vehicle which Jews must take in order to arrive at *Humanitas*. This he makes clear in his introductory paragraph to his essay "Job and Prometheus" (280-1):

"History will undoubtedly designate our times as the Nationalist period. In the age which preceded our own the doctrine of universalism became widespread to an exaggerated degree, so that people actually believed that national differences were artificial barriers which should be destroyed. They believed that there existed in nature a universal man. . . . However, every effort to destroy natural nationalism which is no less natural than universalism . . . failed. . . . In the end nationalism triumphed. Like any reaction of a suppressed natural instinct, nationalism now in its first flush of victory is not satisfied with conquering the position it justly deserves. It is paying back universalism and, like universalism, seeks exclusive dominion, as

if man no longer existed but only the nation. In such times as these it is good to remind people that underlying all the nationalist forms there exists also a universal spirit of man. This spirit appears in a variety of forms, but in its nature and its essence is basic to them all."

The nation, or the national community, is for Ahad Ha'am the concrete form in which the universal aspirations of mankind are best expressed. There is for him no conflict between the national and the universal. "Whatever difference exists between them is merely the difference between the general and the particular . . . humanity in its social meaning—i.e. the element by which we recognize and feel the unity of mankind—can only be conceived as an abstraction. But nationality is the concrete form by which humanity is revealed within every nation in accordance with its condition, its needs and its history." ("Man at Home," p. 49.)

Ahad Ha'am was well aware that an abstract ethic could in no way replace the living God and the intense religious experience of the Jewish community. The nation, its language, its culture, its mores, and its love of Zion were to assume this role. Borrowing from Tardre's psychology, he spoke of the necessity for "spiritual concentration." A concrete objective was needed by means of which the Jewish masses could be galvanized into a unified community. His doctrine of cultural renaissance and his program for a "cultural center" in Zion were developed in order to fill this need.

The cultural center had to be created in a purely Jewish atmosphere. The European Jew was a split personality wherein Jewish and non-Jewish ideas were in constant conflict. Ahad Ha'am always considered the Western European situation as a forecast one generation removed of developments in East-

ern Europe. Just as the Western Jew had been unable to withstand the overwhelming pressure of the majority culture in the West, so would the enlightened Jew fail in Russia. Only in the cultural center can the new synthesis be reached. The majority of world Jewry, continuing to live in the Diaspora, would be nourished from the center.

Quite early in his career, Ahad Ha'am's contemporaries pointed out both real and seeming flaws in his thinking. We have already mentioned Yechezkel Kaufmann's critique of Ahad Ha'am's blending of positivist and idealistic ideas. Berdichevsky took exception to his representation of a "normative" Judaism. Ahad Ha'am's scheme, he argued, was rationist and contrived. It ignored the many irrational and individualist trends which were just as authentically Jewish. Brenner and Borochov called attention to Ahad Ha'am's complete ignorance of the role of economic factors in contemporary Jewish life. They deplored his middle-class, romantic culturism. Above all, Kaufmann and others accused him of misreading Jewish history by divesting Judaism of its traditional theocentricity. Kurzweil's critique incorporates many of these ideas. His attack on Ahad Ha'am's secularization of Judaism differs from that of Kaufmann only in taking a neo-orthodox, existentialist line. Particularly virulent is Kurzweil's assertion that Ahad Ha'am posits Judaism on the blind biologism of the "national will to survive," and this must ultimately lead to an amoral narrow nationalism. But Ahad Ha'am uses the term "national will to survive" in a single article. A careful reading of his life's work would negate any assertion of racist nationalism. Ahad Ha'am was a bourgeois liberal deeply committed to Western European ethics and values.

CONTEMPORARY Judaism, if anything, is even more fragmented than Judaism was half a century ago. Those of us with deep commitments to Jewish religious liberalism can hardly assert that our view encompasses, or will ever encompass, all the various divergent ideas and movements within Judaism. But the Ahad Ha'amist view of Jewish peoplehood is broad enough to accommodate almost all streams of Judaism, religious or secular. I say "almost" because those who, like the American Council for Judaism, deny peoplehood exclude themselves from its pale. Their position may be logically untenable—how can one define Judaism as solely a religion and then create a religious community which only vaguely resembles any earlier form of Jewish religious expression—but it apparently fills their emotional needs.

Modern Judaism can no longer develop along traditional *halachic* lines. Reformist movements are historically dangerous unless they can create some permanent underpinning to remain constant in the face of change. The idea of an ethical people with a specific Jewish symbolism and culture is perhaps the only groundwork available to them.

Ahad Ha'am may have underestimated the staying power of religion even in a secularist age. The sophisticated reformulation of the God-idea by Jewish as well as Christian existentialists seems to have given new attraction to religion. The present crisis between Capitalism and Communism has likewise engendered a desperate attempt by the bourgeois state to support religion. Genuine Jewish religionists may be dubious as to the depth and permanence of the religious revival both here and in Israel. But none can deny that religion has attained a new acceptance and even a degree of intellectual respectability. The American neo-Ahad Ha'am-

ist movement ("Reconstructionism") has taken this factor into account and thus has become constantly preoccupied with the "God-concept." Ahad Ha'am, however, did not ignore, as do so many Jewish theologians today, the salient fact that millions of Jews have become secularized and will in all likelihood remain non-religious. Perhaps the preponderant majority of modern Jews are destined to be so, whether they join synagogues or not. To many of these people Ahad Ha'am's cultural, romanticist, ethical Judaism has a tremendous appeal and serves to unite them with religionist Jews.

THE DESTRUCTION of the East European community destroyed the dream of Jewish national autonomism which men like Ahad Ha'am and Dubnow shared.* American Jewry, because of the political structure in the United States, has been compelled to define itself in religious rather than cultural-national terms. Herein may lie its chief dilemma. Of all Jewries in history, American Jewry is the least religious. But in order to give a rationale to the socio-cultural fact that we are a people, we were compelled to speak in theological terms. Our synagogues are peopled predominantly by Jews who are not so much God-centered as they are Jewish-centered. "Reconstructionism" has understood this fact and has preached a socio-cultural religious program. The fact that "Reconstructionism" has not spread institutionally ought not to be construed to mean that it has failed. Its ideas have penetrated all Jewish religious groups.

The Israel situation is less clearly definable. Israel is still a melting-pot of a diversity of Jewish cultures. For almost half of its population the Enlight-

* For a fuller discussion of their relationship see Koppel S. Pinson's *Dubnow, Nationalism and History*, Jewish Publication Society, 1958.

enment has not yet come. Nevertheless, the influence of Ahad Ha'am in the school system is readily apparent. The curriculum of the old Jaffa *Gymnasium* (with which he was directly concerned) has, with some modification, become the model for Israel's school system. This has prevented the dominant secularism of the European Israeli community from turning "non-Jewish." Ahad Ha'amism will remain a strong preventive force against ultra-nationalism, which is a real danger to any state so constantly threatened by its neighbors.

Ahad Ha'am's formulation of the idea of Israel as a Jewish cultural center is still, I believe, the only way in which Israel and the Diaspora can maintain their relationship. The Diaspora Jew must always live a dual cultural life. Only rare individuals can prevent the dominant Western secularist culture from dominating their spiritual life. How many American Jews will ever be able to read the Bible in the original, let alone the Talmud, the Midrashim, the medieval poets and philosophers? In this sense American Jewry will be the periphery to the great Jewish center in Israel. The relationship with this center will enhance and fructify Jewish scholarship, Jewish group loyalty and Jewish self-esteem. It is already doing so. Only die-hard anti-Zionists consider this a distasteful experience.

On the other hand, we today realize that Ahad Ha'am's and Dubnow's dream of an autonomous and culturally

productive Diaspora community will not come into being. Ahad Ha'am could not foresee the cultural and physical destruction in Eastern Europe. He had only a vague idea of the situation in the United States. Yet if we in America will create our own brand of Judaism we shall have to do so without sole reliance upon the center in Israel. We shall have to develop our own techniques and our own institutions. Cultural influences, Jewish enthusiasm, scholarly stimulation, all these will result, as they have done already, from the contact between the communities. But a determining element will have to be the ideals and the devotion of our own community here in America.

Finally, Ahad Ha'am's preoccupation with community and society, as opposed to our present narcissistic preoccupation with individual salvation and personal religiosity, is a positive factor. Those of us who believe that man can only save himself as part of the community, and that Judaism—in contrast to Christianity—is community-centered, may find his idea still valid in our day.

In the introduction to the second edition of his collected works Ahad Ha'am says: "I believe my endeavors have succeeded in some degree, because I hear the echo of my words, even in the statements of my adversaries." Indeed, Jews of divergent points of view still echo many of the ideas and the suggestions which emanated from Ahad Ha'am's fruitful pen.

A Handful of Ball-Points,

A Heartful of Love

By HARVEY SWADOS

NOBODY is going to believe me. If you want to laugh, laugh. I'm used to it. If you want to cry, cry. As long as you don't blame me—for that I don't need any help.

I had a twelve o'clock lunch date at the Times Square Automat with a salesman named Jack Storer, with whom I sometimes do a little business.

This was a real scorcher of a July day, a Friday, I remember. The streets were melting, the men were carrying their suitcoats, the women were hanging out of their summer dresses, their kids were whining. Only the custard salesmen were making out, and the one thing that made it bearable for me was the knowledge that at least my family was cool up in the mountains. I dragged myself into the Automat and I could hardly believe my eyes. There was an empty table for two right near the front, next to the stairway. Jack and I have got a standing joke that when we're going to eat at the Automat we should call up first and make a reservation.

I grabbed it quick, parked myself facing the street, and threw my briefcase onto the other chair to save it for Jack. After I had a long drink of ice water, I hauled out of the briefcase a bunch of ball-point pens that I was planning on showing to Jack. They were four-color jobs engraved with mottoes that glowed in the dark—a nice novelty item that Jack could move in quantity. I was spreading them out before me so he could see the color selection when my eye happened to catch that of an elderly man who was carrying a tray with a slice of berry pie and a cup of light coffee on it. It was one of those mutual glances where two strangers seem to see right inside each other in an instant, as though they are really old friends. The old man was shaved to within an inch of his life, but his hair was cut by hand and he was dressed shabby, almost like a panhandler. I figured, probably he was living on a small pension and picking up a couple extra bucks as a messenger boy.

He was a little flustered by my sizing him up the way I did, and he must have decided that at one time or another he had delivered me a bag of sandwiches or a roll of blueprints, because he turned on a small smile and a faint nod. It was such a tiny nod that he could have denied its existence if I had frozen up. But I didn't. What happened instead

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was that this business of acknowledging me made him lose his stride, so that when he hit the bottom step of the stairway he wavered uncertainly and the tray tipped in his hands. Another guy coming down the stairs jostled him at the shoulder, and that did it.

The pie and the coffee went skating across the black shiny tray and hit the marble steps, slosh, smack. I knew in that very instant, even before the Puerto Rican busboy came along with his mop to clean up the mess of berry jam, pie crust and coffee, that the old man had just lost his lunch and was going to have to go hungry until supertime. Sure enough, he stood there for a moment with a weak sickly grin on his face, then instead of heading back for the Pies and Desserts section he made straight for the door and went out into the street.

I SAT paralyzed for a second. Then I was after him, grabbing my briefcase and ball-points as I went. I didn't have any idea what I'd do. In fact, I doubt if I'd have had the nerve to walk up to the old-timer and ask if I could get him some lunch, not with him wearing that smile. But I figured at least I could take off after him and see where he was going.

It was no use. He was swallowed up in the sticky crowd flowing sluggishly up and down Broadway. What was worse, when I barged out of that freezing restaurant into the ninety-one degrees of high noon, the sun struck down at me out of the sky and the heat rose up at me off the suffering sidewalk, and I thought I'd keel over right on the spot. I leaned back against the wall of the building to try to catch a breath of air, with the ice-water bubbling in my belly, and I dropped the briefcase to the ground so I could get my dark glasses out of my breast pocket and onto my nose before I was blinded. I did manage to take off my Panama, because I wanted to wipe the sweat off what's left of my hair, but I just didn't seem to have enough strength left to get rid of the ball-points and haul out a handkerchief. The last thing I can remember was thinking that our table was gone and the hell with it, we'd have to eat someplace else, it was Jack's fault for coming late. Then I guess I passed out, hat in one hand, ball-points in the other. I suppose the only reason I didn't hit the sidewalk was that my shoulders were wedged against the brick and my feet were squeezed against the briefcase.

When I came to, I felt like I was wrestling the world, and I had a really stinking headache. Actually Jack Storer was shaking my arm to snap me out of it, and I was trying to throw him off. And part of the reason for the headache was that he had taken off my sunglasses to make sure it was me, and that blazing sudden light was burning hell out of my eyelids. I managed to blink my eyes open, and I saw his face, worried and scared, and behind him some nosy passers-by, mostly out-of-towners and tourists. The ordinary New Yorkers were ignoring us, thank God, as usual.

"Lay off, Jack, will you?" I said, exasperated. "You'll pull my arm out of the socket. It's not me that was late, it's you."

He was so relieved that he didn't start to laugh right away, not until he had helped me pull myself together—I was still groggy—and stuff

those damn ball-points into my briefcase. But then I mopped off my thin hair and went to put on my Panama (it's a wonder I didn't get sunstroke, or maybe I did have a touch of it already) and it was full of money, for God's sake.

I stood there like one of those nuts you see on Broadway sometimes, talking to themselves, muttering, waving their arms. Absolutely confused. Jack started to laugh like a maniac.

"Come on," he choked. "Count it, count it!"

So I put down the briefcase once more—we were standing near a theatre marquee, with the dead air from the cooling unit blasting out at us and the woman at the ticket counter staring out at us like a death's head—and dug my hand into my upside-down hat. There were half a dozen bills inside, all singles, and a solid fistful of coins—a few pennies, but mostly silver. I handed Jack the paper money and added up the coins.

"Comes to \$13.75," I said finally, "counting what you got there. But I don't get it. What . . . ?"

"They thought you were a panhandler." I thought Jack was going to bust, he was laughing so hard the tears came to those piggy little eyes. "That's the greatest haul I ever heard of for standing fifteen minutes with dark glasses and a bunch of pencils."

"What do you mean, fifteen minutes?" I looked at my watch. It was twenty after one. "An hour and fifteen minutes is more like it. I must have been there easy that long. We made it for twelve o'clock and I was there twelve o'clock."

"Twelve o'clock? We made it for one." He saw I was starting to burn, so he said quickly, "I must have misunderstood. Honest, I'm sorry. Listen, if you've still got an hour, let's go spend some of that loot on a nice crisp Caesar's salad in a nice quiet restaurant."

I was starting to straighten out then, and I thought to myself, I might as well buy him lunch, maybe we can still do some business.

BUT WHEN we were finally sitting down in a dark booth, I found that what I wanted most from Jack was that he should promise me not to tell anybody about what had happened.

"Supposing it gets around," I said, "to people I know in my line of business. They'll think I'm sick in the head."

"Oh, I don't know," Jack laughed some more, "they might have more respect than ever for an operator that can go out and pick up that kind of change on his lunch hour. What do you say to the fruit salad with iced coffee? Let's stay healthy."

I finally got Jack to promise, for what it was worth, and we even made a deal on the ball-points (although I might as well add that he pushed me a little hard), but all day long it kept nagging at me. Not just that it should be kept a secret, but what I ought to do about it to make it good, to square it, or whatever.

I knocked off early, around four, went up to 184th Street and got my car out of the garage, and all the way up to Ellenville I turned it around

in my mind. At last I decided, I'll talk it over with Bernice, maybe she'll have some suggestions.

That turned out to be not such a hot idea either. By the time I got to the bungalow the kids were over-tired from day camp and waiting up, and they didn't feel like holding still while I sat down to a late supper with their mother. Then after we got them tucked in and Bernice took the pincurls out of her hair that she washed and set every Friday in honor of my arrival, she was raring to go down to the casino and show us off to all the other couples who were starting to celebrate the weekend.

"Wait a second, Bern," I said, and while she was wriggling into her slip I told her the whole story. I included what I had never gotten around to telling Jack Storer, the business about the old timer who slipped and dropped his berry pie and coffee.

"I don't see what it's got to do," she said, after I had finished. "I mean, the old man dropping the pie and you picking up all that money. What's one thing got to do with the other?"

I did wrong, I wanted to say, but the words stuck in my throat. Saying that wouldn't have made the whole story sound any the less cracked. On the contrary. But Bernice is far from a dope, after all, she's a college woman. Naturally she laughed at the idea of me snoring out on the street and strangers throwing money into my fifteen-dollar Dobbs. Who wouldn't laugh? But she saw that I was serious and that it was getting under my skin. She took my arm going down the hill to the casino, so she shouldn't trip in her satin pumps with the high glass heels, and she tried to comfort me.

"I tell you what," she said. "You got it into your head that the thirteen dollars and seventy-three cents is blood money, don't you? I mean, because you weren't entitled to it."

"Something like that."

"So get rid of it tonight. Spend it on something useless, down at the casino, like mah jongg or Bingo, then you won't have it on your mind."

WELL, I did that anyway, like always when I get up to the mountains for the weekend. What good did it do? I only felt like I was spending *my own* thirteen dollars and seventy-three cents. Came two a.m., when I hung my pants over the chair and took out my wallet, I felt I still had *their* money in it. I could buy guys like Jack all the lunches in the world, I could blow all the money I had in games on weekends, I would still have money that didn't belong to me.

I turned it over in my mind all Saturday and Sunday. I thought, maybe I should give it to charity, but there again it would be the same problem, I would only be giving away my own money, nobody else's. And it wasn't charity gave it to me in the first place, it was people that could afford to do it because it made them feel a little better.

Maybe that was what gave me my brainstorm. Monday morning, a quarter to five, I dragged myself out of bed and crawled into the car. I must have been halfway to New York on Route 17 when it hit me, what I ought to do.

I couldn't wait to get through the morning. Came half past eleven, I got our bookkeeper to give me twenty singles for two tens. Then I took a bus up to Duffy Square and got out. I started on the corner just north of the Automat, not an arm's length from a guy with a driver's hat who was shilling for the sightseeing bus lines. At first I was a little scared, after all I never did anything like it before, but as soon as I had the bills in my hand it went like cream cheese.

I honestly don't remember, did I say anything, didn't I say anything, but I'll never forget how good it felt those first couple minutes, handing out the money. I just held it in my left hand, and peeled off singles and handed them to people coming toward me. Some of them shook their heads No and kept on walking, refused to take the money; others took without even looking to see what it was. Both kinds, those that took and those that didn't, must have thought they were handbills.

But inside of two or three minutes they got the message. The wise-guys and the rubbernecks both started crowding in on me by the time I had given out maybe a dozen singles, I was trapped in the middle of a clawing, shoving, laughing, yelling mob. My head was buzzing, my hat fell off, I had to hold my hands high, they were jumping for the dough.

"Why don't you just throw it, Mac!" somebody yelled.

That sounded like a good idea, so I opened my fists and let fly, sending the money floating like candy wrappers through the hot smelly sticky air.

Then everybody was screaming and grabbing at once and I felt my suitcoat giving way at the armpits as they tore at me. A cop was banging his way through the mob, jabbing and rapping with his club—it was the first time in my life outside the newsreels that I actually saw a cop using a billy—and when he finally reached me he linked his arm with mine and cleared us a path through the screaming faces.

"You going to come quietly?" he asked, when we were loose.

"Come where?"

"I'm going to book you for disturbing the peace."

What was I going to do, give him an argument there in the hot sun on the broiling sidewalk while he mopped his face and took out his book? I wanted to ask, What kind of a world is this, where it's okay if you take money, but if you give money you get arrested? I've always been afraid of cops, I admit it, so I kept my mouth shut.

I did have to do some talking before the day was over, though. Otherwise they would have sent me to Bellevue for observation. What I did was, I told the magistrate I'd had a couple of drinks and the sun hit me and I tried to be a big shot, and I was sorry as hell about the whole thing, and I'd take what was coming to me, and it wouldn't happen again.

So I paid my fine and walked out a free man, thank God. The only thing I left out when I sweet-talked the magistrate was that it wasn't now that the sun had hit me, and it wasn't now that I had acted like a damn fool. It was that first time, that Friday noon, when the old man

lost his lunch on account of me. Even though I feel sure now that I did my best to pay it back, that's something I can't seem to make clear to anybody, even though I keep trying and trying and trying.

There Is No Jerusalem But This

By SAMUEL MENASHE

The shrine streaming in my blood
Flows a fire whose form within
My physical form is limned—
An inner skin without a seam—
So I am one and whole alive,
Each breath chalice

There is no Jersuaem but this
Built in the blood by a great burning—
I believe in the Prophets and Blake
And like David I bless myself
With all my might
I know all hills were holy once
But in the level land of the dead
The last stand is Zion made marrow—
Thus in my bones I am the King's son
And through Death's domain
A secret prince of Life

In connection with the publication of Leon Trotsky's diaries (*Stalin*, by Leon Trotsky, the Universal Library, Grosset & Dunlap, 516 pp. \$1.95; *Trotsky's Diary in Exile. 1935*, Harvard University Press, 218 pp. \$4.00.) we offer here the essay on Trotsky by the late Labor Zionist spokesman, HAYIM GREENBERG. The first part of this essay was written in 1939, on the occasion of Trotsky's 60th birthday. The second and third parts were written shortly thereafter, in 1940, soon after Trotsky's assassination. This is the first time that this essay appears in English.

Leon Trotsky

By HAYIM GREENBERG

IT MAY SEEM strange (and may the future historian forgive me for the seeming pettiness and "vulgarity" of the recollection) but one of the associations evoked in me by Trotsky's name is . . . gastronomic. I recall how in 1920 I was confronted with a serious problem: for urgent personal reasons I had to go from Kiev to Moscow for a couple of weeks. But it was then almost impossible to obtain a travel permit for personal purposes, and even if I had somehow succeeded in obtaining the necessary papers from the dozen or so different offices, how could I have gotten a place in a train—an ordinary seat on a hard bench—for the several days which such a trip then lasted. Luckily some kind-hearted Communist acquaintances arranged for me an appointment with one of Trotsky's assistants who just then happened to be in Kiev in "his own car." He consented to take me into his car when he was ready to return to Moscow and gave me a document granting me permission to travel, and also containing a paragraph dealing with what was then a very delicate matter—provisions. I had the right, this paragraph stated, to go

to a certain government store where I would be issued provisions for the three days I would be en route. When I came to the specified store (where ordinary Soviet mortals could buy nothing because its supplies were reserved for the chosen elite) I was at once issued a ration which made my head swim: white bread, butter, biscuits, pounds of cheese and smoked meat, tea and sugar enough to supply an entire family for weeks, salami, smoked fish—this at a time when nine-tenths of the urban population in the country literally starved. Later I learned that not even the privileged categories in the population could get such supplies, that even among the elite there was a select super-elite of Bolshevik aristocrats who alone could claim such luxuries, and that it was the magic of Trotsky's name that stood me in good stead in this case. Anyone traveling in one of "Trotsky's trains" must have some very special connections, and for such a one even the starved and tattered Russia of that day could be a land of milk and honey.

In the light of cosmic events this incident is naturally trivial and I should perhaps be ashamed to tell it in polite

society. (Is that all that stuck in your mind from the days of the Russian Revolution? I may be asked. Are you looking for spots on the sun's glory?) However, this "trivia" clung to my memory because at that very same time a doctor warned me of the early death of the person dearest to me because, as the doctor said, he could not treat diseased lungs without the aid of bread and butter. I might still not have thought of it at this time were it not that I came upon Trotsky's treatise on proletarian ethics (*Their Morals and Ours*) in which, in the course of a cynically witty polemic he accuses the modest and semi-ascetic Norman Thomas of still living like a bourgeois despite his socialist speeches and writings.

Trotsky has deservedly acquired a reputation as a first-class polemicist. Yet every competent polemicist conceals a sadist. Among Jews it is said of *schochtim* (ritual slaughterers of cattle and fowl) that Providence had destined them to be highwaymen, but because of the merit of their pious forefathers their verdict was changed and the aggression of the highwayman became transmuted into the religiously approved bloodshed of the *schochet*. Trotsky's laboratory of polemical instruments is a kind of sublimated *cheke*. Let anyone dare commit the counter-revolutionary sin of disagreeing with him, and he will at once pass sentence and "execute" the personal reputation of his opponent.

WHAT IS MOST deplorable is the fact that certain liberal circles still consider Trotsky an innocent sufferer and, what is more important, look upon him as a temporarily defeated fighter for all those great values which Stalin so brutally tramples with his despotic boots. But in the final analysis, Trotsky is a good Stalinist and Stalin is not such a bad Trotskyist. The ideolog-

ical differences between them are not nearly as overwhelming as each of them tries to persuade us. Stalin is not Pilate, neither is Trotsky Jesus. The conflict between the two is not a clash between a Cain soul and an Abel soul, but between two Cains for whom the world is too small to be divided equitably. Trotsky had had a sufficiently long time and adequate opportunities to demonstrate in fact how dearly he prized those values and principles which Stalin degraded. He demonstrated that when power over Russia rested to such a large extent in his hands he acted, and permitted others to act, as Stalinists. Under the Lenin-Trotsky rule (the golden and righteous epoch in the history of Bolshevism) no fewer people were shot than in all of Stalin's bloody purges, nor was it ever clear why and to what purposes this was done. In recent years Trotsky tried to excuse himself that although he had displayed no little cruelty during the time of his rule, he never slandered his victims. This too could be considered an accomplishment, had it been true. But Trotsky apparently has his own private concepts, not only of justice but also of what constitutes historical truth. On a number of occasions he described the falsehoods which Lenin employed in the course of his political career as "mild exaggeration." He permits himself such "mild exaggeration" also when dealing with historical facts in which he was involved. Trotsky does not even deny that thousands of Kronstadt sailors were shot in 1921 with his knowledge and consent. But, he maintains, they were not slandered, they were not framed-up. To this day he maintains that the mutiny of the Kronstadt sailors was counter-revolutionary whereas all one has to do is read the so-called Petropavlovsk Resolution adopted by them to see how thoroughly false and what a frame-up

Trotsky's contention is. Among the fifteen points raised by the sincere *Communists* of Kronstadt, we find some demands which the Lenin-Trotsky government put into effect a few weeks after the "counter-revolutionaries" who proposed them were executed, or protests and exceptions which Trotsky himself has for years past used as a basis for his political program. (Among these are protests against the bureaucratization of the regime, against deadening the democratic spirit in the Soviets, in the Party and in the Army.) Nor is Kronstadt an isolated instance. It would be well for many to recall the trials of Socialists, Anarchists, and technical experts at the time when he still exerted a certain control over events in the Soviet Union.

Trotsky is the last person in the world who has a right to protest against Stalin's injustice. In fact, Stalin practices Trotsky's justice. Trotsky always acted in accordance with Lenin's recipe, and Lenin was a true disciple of Nechaiev, that ultimate source of revolutionary nihilism, who made himself immortal with his formula: "Everything that helps the triumph of the revolution is ethical; everything that hinders it is unethical and criminal." But who is to say the last word regarding what helps and what hinders the triumph of the revolution? Naturally, the one who succeeds in grasping revolutionary power. Today Stalin has it. Once Trotsky had it to some extent and millions of people remember the beating they got from him and the blows from which other people perished.

FUNDAMENTALLY, both Stalin and Trotsky are birds of a feather. Today Stalin considers Trotsky to be in his debt—he owes him his head. Trotsky reciprocates with wish-fulfillment dreams: "Should either one of us lose his head or in some other way be gotten

rid of, then I will return to Moscow. . . ." It could have been the other way around: Stalin somewhere in hiding and Trotsky in the Kremlin. The destinies of Russia and of the world in general would not have been altered by such an arrangement. Danger of Bolshevik-Imperialist expansion into new countries and over more peoples? In the past it was objectively ruled out for Trotsky. Should such chances now arise as a result of the war, Stalin will certainly not miss any opportunities.

Trotsky's suffering in recent years has not purified him nor evoked within him any repentant thoughts. As in the past, he still has unqualified faith in himself and is in love with himself. At any rate, he wants to convince us that he has never erred in the past and did no wrong (excepting perhaps a few faulty strategic moves). Should anyone point to his blood-stained hands, he would insolently sneer at such a person's bourgeois hypocritical morality and he would dialectically demonstrate that his hands are really *baptized* in blood and that the *cheka* for which he is intellectually and politically responsible, was in reality a revolutionary tribunal as long as it was in the right hands. His last treatise on revolutionary morality, which is a model of vulgarity and irresponsibility, he dedicated to the memory of his son, "who also abhorred Pharisees." That Trotsky knew nothing about the Pharisees is beside the point. He never took the trouble to find out who they were. But what he lacks is precisely some of the Pharisees' spirit, some of their sensitiveness to the differences between the clean and the unclean, between things that are permitted and things that are taboo under all circumstances, even when ostensibly indulged in for sacred ends.

But if Trotsky did not acquire such a sensitivity in the sixty years of his life, and especially in his late years

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which brought him so much suffering and persecution, he will not revise his truth in the future. He will not renounce his posture of final revolutionary authority to his dying day. Just as he seems to be incapable of personal friendship (this definition of Trotsky's character was made last summer by Diego Rivera, a man who was of incalculable service to Trotsky) so is he also incapable of experiencing the consoling melancholy of aloneness and of self-confrontation. The world for him is like a well-packed theater balcony which at the present time is not doing right by him—it does not applaud or shout hysterically "Hurrah for Trotsky." He looks forward hopefully to millions of disciples; he looks to every corner of the world—will they ever appear? Will they ever appear again? Is a new pedestal being readied for him? (1939)

L EON TROTSKY was "liquidated," without an official trial, without the customary sadistic speech by the Soviet prosecutor and also without the, by now, classical confession. He was "liquidated" on alien soil, thousands of miles from the Kremlin, at the hands of a creature of Stalin who carried out his orders in the guise of a friend and admirer of Trotsky.

It would be naive to speculate why Stalin needed Trotsky's death at the particular time when he was murdered. For many years there was not a moment when Stalin did *not* need Trotsky's death. It is folly to think that one man's desire to remove another man from off the face of the earth must always be motivated by some clear and practical motive. The first mythical murder was never rationally explained. In a "material" sense Cain and Abel were not rivals. The world was big enough for both, and each found fulfillment in a different sphere. Of course,

Trotsky was no Abel, and a comparison with Cain might be too complimentary for Stalin. (Stalin never displayed those symptoms of guilt which legend ascribes to Cain.) But for a long time it had become impossible for the two to co-exist on the same planet, and even a bigger planet than our earth would not have sufficed for two such extreme egocentrics.

Granted that for some time before his death Trotsky had become politically a corpse and could not have materially hindered Stalin's plans and ambitions. But for many years Stalin was no longer concerned with the harm which Trotsky could have caused him, only with the existence of the man whose diabolical hatred he so well knew because it was a true copy of the hatred which Stalin felt toward him. The trouble with these two genial haters was that they were not contemplative types but possessed active natures. Not for them the role of the passive hater of the popular anecdote who had but one request to God: that he should become a millionaire so that he could buy a villa in some quiet spot and there, in the midst of idyllic surroundings, he would have nothing to do but sit on a porch surrounded by flowers and indulge in hating his enemy. Both Stalin and Trotsky were not sufficiently introverted for this type of hatred. Like their Petcheneg predecessors on the soil of Russia one thousand years earlier, they needed each other's lopped off heads to display before their followers with outcries of jubilation, and then to drink toasts from their enemy's skull. Therefore, even a politically powerless and helpless Trotsky posed a threat to Stalin. The fact that he existed, breathed, thought, remembered, hated and reminded others, the fact that he knew too much, and so thoroughly understood Stalin's true nature, the fact that somewhere on earth there ex-

isted an acute analyst who understood every dark and murderous corner of Stalin's soul—these became the greatest griefs of Stalin's life, the constant destroyers of his peace, the permanent murderers of his sleep.

Furthermore, Stalin knew all along with the sure knowledge of animal instinct what Trotsky would have done to him were he to have come out on top, were he to have seized Lenin's heritage and the mighty and omnipresent apparatus of power. Thus Stalin could justify his actions with a fair degree of inner conviction: I did to Trotsky what he would have done to me had he the power to do so, what he longed to do to me in his revenge fantasies, what he in fact tried to do a number of times when he sent emissaries from his exile in Constantinople with the mission to get me out of the way.

Nor must we rule out altogether the possibility that Trotsky maintained the "courier service" to Russia (which he operated with so little success from his exile in Turkey) to the day of his death. Stalin had adequate grounds to consider Trotsky an active, agile and constant conspirator. He might well have thought: It does not matter that the Fourth International has no permanent address and that only a handful of people stand by Trotsky. The original group of Bolsheviks in 1917 was still smaller, yet that group knew how to exploit a favorable moment. The world situation is so charged with dangers and possible surprises that—who can tell?—if the handful of Trotskyites is not to be decapitated in time, it might take advantage of an opportune moment, just as the handful of Bolsheviks did in the summer of 1917. . . . The masses of people whom it is possible to lead into the streets in parades chanting demands of death to Trotsky, may, in other circumstances, in some moment

of twilight for a revolutionary idol, hoist the so recently and passionately hated Trotsky to their shoulders and proclaim him as the new idol. . . .

THE FOREGOING might appear to some as a defense of Stalin and a kind of justification for the gruesome murder which the Bolshevik Judas committed in Mexico. It is hardly necessary to point out again how revolting was this act of calculated brutality executed under the cloak of hypocritical friendship. But it was necessary to consider the event for an instant in Stalin's terms which were essentially, though not formally, Trotskyist. . . . Under the impact of the tragic aspects of the murder one is inclined to forget Trotsky's role before his power waned, the sadistic nature of his revolutionism, his initiative in establishing the *cheka* and introducing inquisitorial methods, his approval of mass terror, his theory of revolutionary morality which sanctioned punishment not only of persons who had transgressed against the Soviet government but also of their wives, children, friends and neighbors (Trotsky's well-known policy of taking hostages), his theory and practice of punitive expeditions against villages and entire districts, the executions he ordered in the army and the mass slaughter in Kronstadt of fellow-Bolsheviks who rebelled against the bureaucracy which Trotsky so energetically and capably established and which in later years he sought to destroy because it came into the service of his enemy. The differences between Trotsky and Stalin were primarily intellectual. Trotsky was an intellectual—Stalin a lowbrow; Trotsky was well-informed and keenly analytical—Stalin oversimplified matters and was not concerned with socialist doctrine; Trotsky was a man of varied knowledge—Stalin had only the wisdom of primitive instinct. . . .

The scope and value of the differences in principles between the two has long been exaggerated. Trotsky called for world revolution as against socialism in one country primarily because he was in the opposition, and it is a standing rule that for an opposition those in authority are always wrong. . . . But Stalin, too, never renounced the idea of world revolution. . . . Given a favorable situation he would be more than glad to "rescue" and "liberate" one country after another. . . .

The murder of Trotsky must arouse serious thought in the minds of intellectually sound and sensitive persons. If Trotsky and Stalin are typical of revolutionary salvationists, if those who undertake to redeem humanity bear within themselves such volcanos of hate, brutality and criminality, and if redemption is not to be obtained from other sources, then social redemption is a curse. Perhaps we should no longer laugh at the Jewish village woman who, when her husband told her that the Messiah was about to come in a few days, exclaimed that the God who had saved us from Pharaoh and Haman and others of their kind would have mercy and also save us from the Messiah's hands.

IN HIS VOLUME of essays *To the Finland Station*, Edmund Wilson mentions a detail in Trotsky's biography—how Lev Davidovitch Bronstein acquired his new name. It was not simply chosen at random, nor was it dreamed up by Trotsky. Nor did it have anything to do with the town Troki in the Vilna district whence came a number of Trotskys. When Trotsky escaped from his Siberian exile in 1902, some associates at a small railway station gave him some clothing and a blank passport. On his way to Samara he had to fill out the passport. When he came to the choice of a name he did not

give the matter much thought and put down the name of the chief supervisor of the Odessa prison where he had been jailed for some months.

Why did he choose the name of a supervisor of a jail? Edmund Wilson pays no attention to this detail. Some thirty or forty years ago such a question would only have evoked a smile. What do you mean, why? It just happened, an accident. Who knows? Perhaps this was the first name that came to his mind, and it came to his mind just like that, "without any reason." But today one may even reject some premises of psychoanalysis and smile condescendingly at some of its extravagances, yet one would no longer maintain that there are accidents in one's psychology. Adopted names are certainly not accidental; very frequently they are closely bound up with the most intimate states of one's soul.

I will not undertake to provide an explanation in this case. I lack both the specialized knowledge and, still more so, familiarity with the techniques of analysis. Nevertheless, I am convinced that in this instance we are dealing with a most unusual case: an extremist revolutionary adopts the name of a prison official and lives with it all his days. Under the name of the Czarist supervisor of prisoners Trotsky founded the Red Army, conducted the Civil War, wrote books, delivered speeches, went into exile, wandered from country to country and finally fell under the axe of a traitor. During nearly three decades he had more than one opportunity to change this name (or to reclaim his original name) yet he did not do so. Had he forgotten whose name he had adopted? Did this name never evoke any associations within him? Let us say he had forgotten, but such forgetfulness is far from accidental.

Reading Trotsky's autobiography one

is impressed by his remarkable memory. (He never forgot anyone who ever even attempted to step on one of his corns.) But he was also a remarkable "forgetter." Writing his autobiography he clearly remembered who his father was. In Bolshevik terminology Trotsky's father would have been classified as a *kulak*. He succeeded in gaining possession of 650 acres of land from Colonel Yanowski's estate and he ran his establishment with much gusto. Well-to-do himself, he was not above allowing some poor peasant woman to come to him on foot twice, a distance of seven miles, to get a ruble which he owed her for work done. The peasants whom he employed as wage workers would only get soup and *kasha* for their meal. In order to obtain some meat from time to time they would have to stage protest demonstrations in the course of which they would lie on the ground face downward. Trotsky also well remembered the tears of peasant women whose cattle his father held for ransom when they trespassed on his pasture land. About the only good thing Trotsky could say of his father was that he had been an atheist. He observed neither Sabbath nor holidays and often declared that he believed neither in *charoseth* nor in the existence of God. His "education" seems to have consisted in not talking Yiddish at home, for we get the impression from Trotsky's biography that his father was illiterate in both languages. As to his manners and general behavior, we can gauge these from Trotsky's praise for his uncle in Odessa with whom he lived for some time when he went to high school. That uncle taught Trotsky "Russian grammar, how to wash himself, and how to hold a glass."

All of these things Trotsky remembered and it should be said to his credit that he did not choose to pass over them in silence. But in later years

he completely seemed to have forgotten one detail of his childhood environment—the fact that from that environment there emerged . . . a Trotsky, and that any man's career, psychology, and destiny are not necessarily determined by the economic class from which he came. When Trotsky had power in Russia he was the greatest enemy of the *kulaks* and he defined a *kulak* as a peasant who did not own even one-twentieth part of what his own father owned. Following his system of reasoning, he naturally had every right to desire to destroy every peasant who owned his own goat and every shopkeeper whose shelves boasted merchandise worth a few rubles. But what could he have against these people's children? How could he tell how many potential Trotskys were growing up in the huts of his class enemies? But it was precisely under Trotsky's regime that the concept of *declassed* (persons deprived of equal rights as Soviet citizens because of their bourgeois origins) with all its murderous consequences was introduced.

Trotsky conveniently forgot that it was possible for "world redeemers" to emerge from the homes of *kulaks*. Having forgotten this he caused the murder of so many *kulak* children that he could not himself know their exact number.

* * *

The measure of Trotsky's tolerance when he was still a youngster becomes evident from a letter he then wrote to the Public Library of Nikolaiev. When he was still a high school student, the later dialectician of Marxist Cabbala was a *Narodnik* and proclaimed as unclean anything that smacked of historical materialism. It so happened then that a magazine published by the *Narodniks* slipped out of their control and was taken over by Social Democrats (incidentally, this was the first periodical that legally advocated Marx-

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true

ism in Russia). Trotsky at once petitioned the Public Library to cancel its subscription to that journal. The enthusiasm for censorship of ideas burned brightly within him even then. When in 1918, together with Lenin, he suppressed the press of the Social Revolutionaries (the spiritual heirs of the *Narodniks*), petitions of any sort were no longer in fashion in Russia.

* * *

"A plague on all Marxists and on all those who seek to introduce hardness and dryness into all human relations." It is hard to believe that Trotsky uttered these words, yet this was the New Year toast of the still young but quickly maturing Trotsky in Nikolaiev.

The chief protagonist of Marxism in Trotsky's social circle at the time was a young lady, Alexandra Lvovna Sokolovskaya. (The Slavic name need not mislead anyone. This apostle of historical materialism in the provincial town of Nikolaiev was a good Jewish daughter.) At that time Trotsky considered Marxism a threat to individual freedom and autonomy. There were frequent, sharp and spiteful arguments between him and Alexandra Lvovna, to whom he was far from indifferent. During their frequent meetings Trotsky would tease her: "I can't understand how a young woman so full of life can tolerate such constricted, dry as dust, impractical stuff." She in turn would reply flirtatiously, "And I can't imagine how a man who thinks he is logical can be satisfied with such fuzzy idealistic emotions." For a time these clashes were partly flirtatious, partly ideological encounters. In the end the Marxist young lady triumphed, both theoretically as well as erotically. Trotsky experienced a Marxist revelation—and surrendered.

For the rest of his life he remained true to the theoretical associations of

his first love affair, and ever after the formerly intolerant anti-Marxist waved the sword of Marx over the heads of all unbelievers and skeptics. Long before the October Revolution he proclaimed Victor Adler a renegade to socialism because the latter had told him that he would undertake to predict political developments on the basis of the apocalypse with more confidence than on the basis of dialectical materialism.

There is something suspect in Trotsky's intellectual stubbornness and his almost inquisitorial dogmatism. He had a keen mind, cutting sarcasm and much understanding of humor and skepticism. Yet he devoted all his mental energies, resorting to hair-splitting, intellectual acrobatics and casuistry, to a desperate clinging to the confines of Marxist *halacha*.

It is not for me to draw conclusions, but it might be worthwhile for some trained psychoanalyst to attempt to reveal the erotic factors and the infantilisms in Trotsky's "consistent" Marxism. What was the role of the image of Alexandra Lvovna in the shaping of his personality?

Once, while talking about a man known to both of us, Rabbi Mazeh of Moscow said to me: "In God's name tell him that he should not go to *taschlich* on *Rosh Hashonah*, for if he were to see his reflection in the water he would not be able to bear it—he might think for a moment that there is another one like him in the world and that he is not unique in the universe."

This malicious joke came to my mind while reading Bruce Lockhart's diaries. After meeting Trotsky in 1918, he wrote: "He makes the impression of a man who would gladly sacrifice his life in the struggle for Russia—on one condition, that a great crowd should witness his doing so."

It should be added perhaps, "and that he should be *the only one* to do so."

At one time Trotsky read only one book each day for months on end—the Bible. When he was imprisoned in Odessa he was treated harshly and was not permitted to receive books. But the Czarist officials could not very well deny him the Holy Scriptures and his sister brought him the Bible in four languages: Russian, German, French and Italian.

It is remarkable how little Trotsky was impressed by the Book of Books. His style, his associations, the rhythm of his speech and writing remained completely unaffected by biblical literary influence. He merely *used* the Bible to learn foreign languages. The prophets, the Book of Job, the Song of Songs—these were merely linguistic aids.

Trotsky once told this to the writer D'Or, and the latter responded with the Russian peasant maxim that was often quoted by Lenin: "In a good household every piece of trash comes in handy."

Naturally, Trotsky did not believe in immortality, but seldom was there a man as obsessed with his own *historical immortality*. (In our time only Hitler with his inflated ego and unabashed melodramatics, and the taciturn and secretive Stalin equalled Trotsky in this regard.) A monument to Trotsky in some remote corner of Tibet in the 29th century would appear logical in the light of his conception of the future. While addressing the first congress of Soviets immediately after the October Revolution, Trotsky shouted to Martov and his followers (they were still "legal" and their membership in the Soviet was still recognized): "You are miserable, isolated in-

dividuals; you are bankrupt; your role is finished. Go where you belong from this day—*on the trash heap of history*." The seats of honor in history? Valhalla he reserved for the Bolsheviks, and for himself—the speaker's platform.

But in order to be sure of such a place of honor in the historical hereafter one must first acquire a good share in the present, a commanding position in one's own generation. This passion for power burned within Trotsky ever since his boyhood days, and in this connection it is interesting to hear what he says in his Autobiography regarding his high school experiences. He relates that he divided his classmates into three categories: those who "betrayed" him, those who "defended" him, and "neutrals." (The center of the high school universe was Trotsky himself, naturally.) With his "betrayers," he informs us, he broke off unconditionally; his "defenders" he cultivated; and the "neutrals" he ignored. A high school boy who was neither for nor against Trotsky simply didn't count.

Trotsky's high school sociology was not unlike that of the waiter in the restaurant where I have my lunch. For him, too, humanity is divisible into three categories: those who finish their meal and leave no tip (to hell with the cheapskates); those who leave only a dime or two (O.K., let them live); and customers who leave a generous tip (blessings and long life to them). Without wishing to hurt my waiter's feelings, I'd say that, in another dimension, he was almost Napoleonic. The server of stew and the author of the Permanent Revolution were both, each in his own way and on his appropriate scale, Napoleonic characters, so far as their classification of their fellow-men was concerned.

comment

In the Autumn issue of Midstream we reprinted, with the kind permission of The Twentieth Century, the article, "The Polish Jews Need Not Have Died," by Reuben Ainsztein. This essay evoked widespread comment in the pages of The Twentieth Century, both pro and con. In order to provide the American reader with an opportunity to become familiar with the full scope of the discussion, we here reprint, with the permission of the Editor of The Twentieth Century, the correspondence which appeared in the October and November issues of that magazine in response to Mr. Ainsztein's article.

EDITORS

The Fate of the Polish Jews

"...**B**ETRAYAL by the mass of the Polish people..." "... The Polish people as a whole was determined to treat the Nazis' 'Final Solution' as a unique and even God-sent opportunity to rid Poland of all her Jews..." "For perhaps no other people in Europe—with the exception of the Germans—is burdened with a greater complex of guilt towards Jews than the mass of the Polish people." Thus was a nation of 27 million condemned as beyond redemption by Mr. Reuben Ainsztein, writing in last month's issue of *The Twentieth Century*. Polish crimes did not end even with the war. Mr. Ainsztein concludes that "in many of those Poles who are generally regarded in this country as the natural allies of the West they [the Jews] still have the power of awakening blind hatreds as the events following the Poznan demonstrations [the anti-Stalin movement in 1956] have shown."

At the end of the war the victorious allies put the leaders of defeated Germany in the dock. They accused and condemned the Nazi system—not the German nation—for all the unspeakable crimes committed against the peoples of Europe. Now,

very many years later, Mr. Ainsztein condemns the whole Polish nation *en masse*, though it was one of the main sufferers of the Nazi régime and its tribulations are still far from being over.

Mr. Ainsztein has pronounced this grim sentence on the basis of facts which are either dubious or downright false. Even those which are true are presented without any attempt to give their proper background. Their source is obvious. They were mainly compiled by the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, which is controlled by Stalinists. Its director, Berl Marek, who spent the war years in Soviet Russia as a Communist official, laid down the Party line on the treatment of the Jewish tragedy in Poland in a pamphlet published in Moscow as early as 1944. It was meant to be distributed among the hundreds of thousands of Polish Jews then rotting in Russia who hoped to return after the war to an independent Poland. Its purpose was to win their sympathy for the future Communist rulers of Poland, who were presented as their only possible defenders among a cruel and debased nation.

Mr. Ainsztein has evidently had no time to study the original sources dealing with the extermination of the Jews in Poland, and the armed resistance offered in the Ghettoes of Warsaw, Wilno and Bialystok. He has also accepted the Party line that the whole non-Communist Polish underground movement, and the Sikorski and Mikolajczyk war-time governments in London, were controlled by "the Sanacja, the party which ruled Poland since 1926 together with the National Democrats." This is a travesty of the facts, as is also the *canard* which he repeats that "detachments of the [Communist] People's Army attacked German gun positions [during the Ghetto uprising] from outside, supplied the Ghetto fighters with ammunition and, according to German sources, actually joined the Jews in their fight inside the Ghetto." The anonymous "German sources" are in fact the report of the Nazi command which destroyed the Ghetto and

which invented the story to prove that they were fighting not against half-starved and mostly unarmed Jews, many of them women and children, but against Russian-armed Communist guerrillas.

The writer is no doubt deeply bitter. But bitterness is a treacherous guide in passing judgment on such a vast and complex case. This is, at least, a charitable explanation of a serious mistranslation. The name of the Polish Fascist war-time organization was Nationalist Armed Forces (*Narodowe Sily Zbrojne*). Mr. Ainsztein calls them the Polish Armed Forces. The latter was the official title of all the fighting Poles—a title made famous by the Polish airmen of the Battle of Britain, the Polish soldiers defending Tobruk and storming Monte Cassino, and the Home Army which in Autumn 1944 fought the tragic battle of Warsaw. By a slip of his pen Mr. Ainsztein has turned all these men into Fascist thugs. All he could concede to the Poles who, as he grudgingly admits, have never produced a Quisling, is that they were unable to collaborate with Nazi Germany. But he at once adds that "the bulk of the Polish people found it perfectly feasible to sympathize and even cooperate with the Nazis in the extermination of their Jewish fellow-citizens."

What is the truth about the help Polish Jews received from their gentile compatriots? Mr. Ainsztein's tale about the great rôle the Communists played in it can be dismissed as a typical exaggeration. Until Summer 1941 the Communists were bound to act in accordance with the then existing Soviet-German Friendship arrangements. Until July 1941 the Soviet press did not even once mention the Ghettos and the massacres of Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe. Communists in Poland were passive. Later they were a negligible force in the resistance movement. Most of them were brought to Poland by the advancing Soviet army at the beginning of 1945, when the extermination of the Jews had been practically completed. In the Ghetto battles the organization and command of the Jewish Fighting Organization was in the hands of Labor Zionists and Socialists [Bund], although some Jewish communists had their share in the heroic fighting.

What help did the Jews receive from the London Polish government, and from its equivalent in Poland, the underground National Council and the Home Army?

What we now know about the annihilation of the Jewish community in Poland leaves no doubt that more could have been done than was done. The gentile Poles had to endure heavy losses. But the Polish Jews were sentenced to perish—men, women and children, and the help should have been given in proportion to the danger.

But it is also true that the bulk of political and practical help from outside which reached the Jews enclosed in their Ghettos came through the Polish government in London, and the patriotic Polish underground inside the country. It is not true, as the September article asserts, that the London Polish government kept silent about the anti-Jewish acts of the Nazis or did not warn the Poles against collaborating with them in these crimes. It was the Polish government which sent more than one note to the British and American governments, drawing their attention to the inhuman behavior of the Nazis towards the Jews in Poland. As a result of Polish representations in November 1942, all the allied governments (including, of course, the Polish) published on December 17th, 1945 a solemn warning of which the last sentence ran: "They [the Allied Governments] reaffirm their solemn resolution to ensure that those responsible for the crimes [against the Jews] shall not escape retribution, and to press on with the necessary practical measures to this end." This warning, concerning not only Germans, was then being repeatedly broadcast to Poland, and circulated through the underground press in Poland.

The next step was the formation of a special organization to help the persecuted Jews. It was not, as Mr. Ainsztein states, an amorphous body "set up by the Catholic intellectuals," but an official department of the Polish underground movement. Bernard Goldstein, a leader of the Jewish Socialist [Bund] underground inside and outside the Ghettos, writes in his memorable book *The Stars Bear Witness*: "On the Aryan [German term for gentile] side [of Warsaw] the Council for Aid to Jews was organized representing almost all the Polish parties. It was a subcommittee of the underground government. Its task was to supply Jews with documents and lodgings, to help Jewish children, to raise money and arms. And further: from the Polish government (in London) the Council received a small financial allotment,

forged Aryan passports, work cards and other necessary documents for Jews" (to make easier their illegal existence outside the Ghettos). "The Polish government in London provided special couriers. Money and correspondence came by plane and parachute." In the report about the activities dated November 15th, 1943, sent from Warsaw to their delegation abroad, the chairman of the Jewish Socialist underground, Dr. Feiner, says in the part dealing with their finances: "apart from it we received through the Representation [of the London Polish government] once 795.000 zlotys and later 1.850.000 zlotys (whose value on the black market was £6.500).

On the question of arms Mr. Ainsztein states in one part of his article that "the policy of the Home Army was to deny Jews arms. . . ." And even more emphatically: ". . . The command of the Home Army refused to supply arms to the Jewish military organizations of the Vilno, Bialystok and Warsaw Ghettos." But a little later in the same article he says: "The chroniclers of the Warsaw Ghetto resistance have recorded the following deliveries of arms by representatives of the Polish Home Army." And then comes a list which is in accordance with the facts, apart from his sudden remark in parenthesis that "most of them were faulty." What is the background of these facts? In reports from Warsaw to their representatives abroad the leaders of the Jewish underground organization demanded that pressure be applied on the command of the Home Army to deliver greater quantities of weapons to the Warsaw and some other Ghettos. Marek Edelman, who was the assistant commandant of the Jewish Fighting Organization and is one of the few surviving heroes of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising of 1943, writes in his memoirs of this period (*The Warsaw Ghetto Fights*, published in Warsaw and New York): "There are very few arms in the Ghetto. One has to remember that this is 1942 and the [armed] resistance movement of Polish society is just beginning. . . . The first armed Polish actions take place in March 1943. No wonder that our endeavors to get arms from the representatives of the [London] government and from other organizations encounter great difficulties. . . ." And later in the same book: "At the end of December 1942 we got the first

transport of arms from the headquarters of the Home Army. They are very few—some ten automatic revolvers. But this makes it possible to plan our first great action, which should take place on January 22nd [1943]. This will be a revenge action on the Jewish police." Then came a few more deliveries. Probably of greater value was the "factory" installed in the Ghetto at the beginning of 1943 with the help of an officer delegated by the Home Army, which, until the uprising, was producing Molotov-cocktails. I am certain that more could have been done by the Home Army to provide the Ghetto fighters with arms than actually happened.

But what about the terrible accusation in Mr. Ainsztein's article that "the bulk of the Polish people . . . co-operated with the Nazis in the extermination of their Jewish fellow-citizens"? Before an answer is given to this question something has to be said about the character of the Nazi occupation régime in Poland. It is almost impossible for people, who were fortunately not subjected to it, to visualize the utter degradation which such occupation means. During the war the Polish population was ruled by lawless terror. Without trial or any other legal process, people of both sexes were shot in their hundreds in the streets of Polish towns and villages, and tens of thousands were sent to extermination camps, there to die. Goldstein, who lived on both sides of the Ghetto walls, says this about the conditions of life for the non-Jews: "During the early part of 1943 the terror throughout all Poland entered a more severe and terrible phase. Armed German bands descended upon small towns and villages, indiscriminately dragging out inhabitants, men, women and children, and shipping them away. All Poland became the scene of a wild human hunt. People went outdoors only under the pressure of extreme necessity. A thick fog of fear hung over the entire country." It was enough to be a Pole to be in constant danger of disappearing into a Nazi camp. The punishment for hiding a Jew, even if it was only an infant, was instant death for the head of the household, and sometimes for his family too.

While the Poles produced no Quislings, it would be foolish to imagine that all 25 millions were ready every day and every night of these 5½ years of Nazi occupation to throw away their lives. Most of

them simply wanted to survive. There were two minorities. One was composed of the many thousands who formed the network of the political resistance or took arms in the Home Army. There was the second minority, which lost its national and personal dignity and was ready, in return for material benefits, to serve the devil himself, and betray their closest friends to the enemy. The latter were the scum of the nation. Some of them, including Polish policemen, systematically blackmailed Jews hidden in Polish homes. It frequently happened that when the victim could no longer pay his blackmailer, he was betrayed to the Gestapo, sometimes together with his gentile host. The war and the occupation made many people brutally selfish. Many Jews fell victims to this brutality, which the Nazis consciously spread among the Polish population. Pre-war anti-Semitism played its rôle.

But contrary to Mr. Ainsztein's assertions that the Home Army and the Polish government refused to intervene against these human jackals, one finds in the Polish underground papers of this period communiqués of the underground courts, announcing sentences passed on such criminals. In every one of these communiqués, after giving the name of the sentenced, the carrying out of the sentence was announced.

The debasement of some groups of people in occupied Europe was not a unique Polish phenomenon. The most dreaded annihilation squads used by the Nazis during the massacres in the Ghettos consisted of Soviet citizens, who had become Nazi collaborators. Not less degrading was the rôle of the Jewish police in the Ghettos, who were used by the Nazis to round up victims for the gas chambers. In the extracts quoted above from Marek Edelman's memoirs, we find voiced the burning hatred of this police. Bernard Goldstein also often mentions the depravity of the Jewish police. Here is his description of the Warsaw Ghetto in August 1942: "The Ghetto became a bloody bedlam. Each day, to save his own skin, every Jewish policeman brought seven sacrificial lives to the extermination altar. He brought whomever he could catch—friends, relatives, even members of his immediate family. There were policemen who offered their own aged parents, with the excuse that they would die anyway."

Such were the sickening human results of the Nazi occupation of Poland. That some Poles also became infected was only to be expected. That so many remained loyal to the higher laws of humanity should command our admiration. Every Jew who survived in Nazi-occupied Poland did so only because gentile Poles risked their lives to hide him. Onlookers in happier countries may respect the nation which neither yesterday nor today has learned to bend its knees before totalitarian tyranny. It would be tragic if the Jewish victims of the Nazi system were used to deprive the Poles of the sympathy of the West.

LUCJAN BLIT.

* * *

SIR,—“Nationalistic judgments always seem to me the *pons asinorum* of the spirit,” you write in your German Diary of last month. Why then do you publish in the same issue an article which is full of such judgments and indeed of the most terrible charges against a whole nation, presented in a highly emotional mixture of proven facts, unproven hints and unprovable generalizations?

I am referring, of course, to Mr. Reuben Ainsztein's article on the behavior of “the Polish People” during the extermination of the Jews in Nazi-occupied Poland. As a member of your editorial board, I have, of course, often disagreed with the views put forward by other contributors, and hope to do so again. But this article moves me to protest because, in my opinion, it raises a question not only of views, but of standards.

I think that most students would agree with Mr. Ainsztein that “the Nazis secured the acquiescence of the mass of the Polish people and varying degrees of collaboration on the part of an important minority for their policy” towards the Jews; and that, if accepted as fact, is terrible enough. I should also agree that the rôle played by endemic Polish anti-Semitism in general, and by particular bodies such as the regular police, the fascist NSZ (who were not part of the Home Army) and even certain right-wing elements of the Home Army in facilitating the Nazi's work of butchery deserve careful and impartial historical investigation. But Mr. Ainsztein's statement that “the bulk of the Polish people found it perfectly feasible to sympathize

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and even *co-operate* with the Nazis in the extermination of their Jewish fellow-citizens" is not only in flat contradiction with the more carefully weighed sentence quoted above. By blurring all relevant distinctions between the bulk of a people and a minority, between the moral responsibility of acquiescence in the crimes of others from motives of fear and indifference and the guilt of co-operating in such crimes from motives of racial hatred, it shows a spirit which is incompatible with such investigation because it has itself become tainted with such hatred.

You may answer that nobody can expect the victims of such horrors to be dispassionate. But we are not dealing with the outcry of a victim trying to alert the world to atrocities which are being committed now, but with the deliberate digging up of horrors which are fifteen years old, and there is, in my opinion, *no* justification for doing that unless it is done with the most scrupulous historical fairness: we can no longer save the victims, but we can and must beware of sowing new hatreds for old. Mr. Ainsztein's sneer at "those Poles who are generally regarded in this country as the natural allies of the West"—at a time when the Poles, and I mean the bulk of the Poles, continue to be victims of foreign oppression—is, I feel, unworthy of the traditions of *The Twentieth Century*.

RICHARD LOWENTHAL.

* * *

SIR,—The wholesale massacre of Jews by Hitlerite butchers in Central Europe and particularly in Poland, causes, even today, more than fifteen years after this tragic event, a sense of revulsion and anger. This feeling must be almost unbearable to the sons of the Jewish nation who so often have been personally afflicted by the loss of all their near and dear ones. Such may have been the experience of Mr. Reuben Ainsztein, whose article on the Jews of Poland appeared in the September number of *The Twentieth Century* under the heading: "Need they have died"? This would explain the bitterness of the article although it cannot excuse its unfairness. Together with all my compatriots, whose sufferings at the hands of the Nazis were second only to those of the Jews, I must resent Mr. Ainsztein's version. It is a slander of Poland's good name. I have no

doubt that competent spokesmen of the Polish Home Army will be given an opportunity by your journal of stating the facts in detail and will revive, for the benefit of your readers, more than one instance of Polish-Jewish co-operation against a common enemy. For my part I shall recall briefly what I know on the subject as a former member of General Sikorski's War Cabinet in the years 1941-43 and as Polish Ambassador in this country throughout the war.

By the very title of his article* Mr. Ainsztein suggests to the reader that, but for want of Polish help, Polish Jews, or at least a large proportion of them, could have survived. He declares that, with the sole exception of the Socialist and Communist parties (the latter, by the way, was practically non-existent in Poland), all other Polish political parties and groups were anti-Semitic! He asserts that even sections of the Polish Catholic Hierarchy shared such views. In a sweeping statement, he accuses the Polish population of betraying Jews, hiding in the countryside, to the German Gestapo. He does more. He levels similar accusations against the Polish Home Army and particularly at its Command, which, according to him, did nothing, or practically nothing, in support of our Jewish co-citizens and ghetto fighters, although, according to Mr. Ainsztein, we could have provided them with needed arms and removed them to safety. Finally, Mr. Ainsztein condemns members of the Polish Government itself, amongst them the Minister of Information, Prof. S. Stronski, a man of broad views and of partly Jewish descent, for anti-Semitism and sabotaging efforts to bring help to Polish Jewry. Nor does he forget the Polish peasants, whom he accuses of murdering Jewish escapees, in order to loot their remaining belongings.

According to Mr. Ainsztein, the Home Army refused to accept Jewish volunteers and attacked and killed Jewish freedom fighters.

I fail to understand what motive prompted Mr. Ainsztein to marshal so many false and twisted facts. It is, alas, true that disaster befell Polish Jewry. German terror in Poland was unequalled anywhere else in Europe. To shelter a Jew was a crime punished by death. I remember personally

* The title was not Mr. Ainsztein's.—Ed.

many stories told me by my friends, of the fearful dangers to which they were exposed, together with their families, for sheltering Jewish adults or children. None the less, nearly 100,000 Jews survived in our country (not 50,000), and all of them thanks to non-Jewish protection. This figure is not negligible. Thousands of these unfortunate people owe their salvation to Catholic priests and convents. The Polish Home Army which was being gradually formed and developed during the years of the German occupation was itself practically unarmed in the year 1942. Progress in this respect was achieved only later by secret production and thanks to drops from Allied airplanes. When deportations of Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto began in that year, followed by massacres in German camps of death, the Commander of the Polish Home Army, General Grot-Rowecki sent an emissary to the Warsaw Ghetto (July 1942), offering the cooperation of the Home Army should the Jewish population decide to oppose its torturers with armed resistance. The offer was declined as the Jewish leaders still hoped to avoid the worst and feared to provoke German reprisals. When the ghetto fighters rose in the spring of the following year, they received arms from the Polish Home Army and were given instructions concerning the production of bombs, plans of the Warsaw sewers (the only way of escape) and also guides. Arms were few as the Poles themselves still had very little. The Home Army tried from outside the ghetto walls to bring relief to those fighting inside. In April, it issued an order threatening with reprisals any member of the Warsaw Municipal Police who might cooperate with the Gestapo in attacking the Jews. In April 1942, the Polish Underground Civil Government, acting on instructions from the Polish Government in London, called into being a special body, the Council of Help to Jews, consisting of representatives of all Polish political parties and organizations and representatives of Polish Jewry. The Council gave aid in the way of money, clothing, forged documents, and provided hiding places for those in need. Many charitable people helped as best they could, amongst them peasants alongside workers.

Contrary to Mr. Ainsztein's statements, Jewish volunteers were welcomed by the Home Army. Several thousands of them served in its ranks and gave a good account

of themselves. There were many Jews amongst doctors accompanying fighting groups of the Home Army. Mr. Ainsztein reserves his praise for the small groups of the so-called People's Guards and People's Army organized, armed and maintained by the Soviet Government, which were insignificant and kept apart from the Underground effort of the whole nation. But what puzzles me above all is how and on what authority he can relate as authentic the following story:

... When on April 19th, 1943, the uprising broke out [in the Warsaw Ghetto] the Home Army left all appeals for arms and ammunition from the Ghetto fighters unanswered, and when it finally chose to reply, its command offered to evacuate the ghetto fighters to south-eastern Poland, where they could prove their Polish patriotism by taking part in the forthcoming battle against the approaching Soviet troops.

There is not one word of truth in this fantastic and malevolent tale. As will be remembered, the Polish Home Army did not fight against Russian troops, but, as these entered Polish territory, it cooperated with them in fighting the Germans. Our troops were, thereupon, in every case, surrounded, captured and deported to the depths of Siberia.

These facts speak for themselves. I think I need scarcely add a plea in defence of the Polish central authorities then in London and for my colleagues, members of the Polish Government. We did the best we could to call the attention of world public opinion to the crimes then being perpetrated in our country on Jews and Poles alike. We often felt that our cry of alarm was not heeded. I myself spoke on many platforms, together with Jewish orators, on these massacres, and maintained contact with Jewish members of the Polish National Council, especially with Deputy Zigelboim, who had been sent to Great Britain by the Warsaw Ghetto inhabitants to call the attention of the world to their fate. Despairing of achieving this aim by his speeches and writings, he took his life in a gesture of protest. How grieved this noble and unfortunate man would have been had he known of the use made, fifteen years later, of the tragedy of his people.

EDWARD RACZYNSKI.

* * *

SIR,—May I, as a student of the extermination of European Jewry, be permitted the use of your space to comment on the correspondence which has surged round Mr. Ainsztein's study in your September number?

I would like to deal first with the article from Mr. Lucjan Blit, who, in spite of some very frank and creditable admissions of the truth concerning Polish collaboration, accused Mr. Ainsztein of using falsified facts. These, he says, were compiled by the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, "which is controlled by Stalinists." To introduce the cold war into this controversy is a red herring, so stale that not even the hounds will follow the scent. Mr. Ainsztein could have got all his data just as easily from Jewish depositions, compiled in non-Communist countries. Moreover, in its first years, the publications of the Jewish Historical Institute of Warsaw were models of objectivity, devoid of political taint. And what does the word "Stalinism" mean in this connection? If it means anything at all, it means the denial to the Jewish people of any title to martyrdom—the official Moscow line. That can hardly be the sense in which Mr. Blit uses this political catchword.

I have no doubt that Mr. Ainsztein, writing with uncontrollable emotion, has committed certain inaccuracies. But what is the sense of replying with much more sweeping inaccuracies? Mr. Blit says categorically that the story of a small group of Polish Communists, who attacked the Germans from outside the ghetto during the rebellion, was an invention of the German commander, General Stroop, to justify his savageries. But why? Stroop's daily despatches were so cold-bloodedly and meticulously composed that there is no reason why he should have invented this detail, to which he attached little importance, more than any other part of the despatches. The story certainly conforms with some of the Jewish survivor's reports.

Pursuing this point, Mr. Blit writes of "Mr. Ainszteins tale about the great rôle the Communists played." I have just re-read the original article with great care and I cannot find this tale, which seems to me a fabric of Mr. Blit's imagination. I do not think he has to tell Mr. Ainsztein—of all people—that the Jewish ghetto fighters were mainly Labor Zionists and Socialists and not Communists, who were

numerically few. The question is what Poles, if any, helped the Jews. Well, Mr. Blit has discovered a Jewish acknowledgment of the receipt of £6,500 worth of zlotys and another acknowledgment for ten revolvers. It does not seem much in the death struggles of 3,300,000 people, does it?

To his credit Mr. Blit concedes that there were Poles who lived by blackmailing hidden Jews and threatening them with the Gestapo. I do not think I have read a single survivor narrative that does not mention this felicitous custom. *Ex ore infantium*, I have even seen it described in the recollections of an escaped R A F prisoner of war. But, having made his admission, it seems a little high-flown of Mr. Blit to claim that "every surviving Jew who survived in Nazi-occupied Poland, did so only because gentile Poles risked their lives to hide them." For nothing?

But, towards the end of his article, Mr. Blit introduces a new defence. The worst Poles, he says, the scum of the nation, were "infected" by bad examples, firstly by the extermination squads composed of Balts and Ukrainians, whom Mr. Blit calls Soviet subjects; secondly by the Jewish police, who would deliver their own kind to save their skins. I grant the facts, but would the Jewish *Ordnungsdienst* have conducted themselves with such panic fear or the extermination commandos with such unbridled licence, if the climate had been sympathetic to the Jews? In France, where the majority of the population sympathized, fully three-quarters of the Jews avoided arrest and deportation. In Poland, after the retreat of the Russians in 1941, not even one per cent. Yet I doubt whether Mr. Blit would admit that Polish resistance to the Germans was any less effective than the French resistance.

Count Edward Raczyński, the former Polish ambassador in London, pursues the same argument and finds that 100,000 Jews survived the German terror in Poland, "thanks to non-Jewish protection". The protection needs closer defining. There were not 100,000 survivors from the Jewish population of pre-war Poland, but several hundred thousand, but most of these had escaped or had been deported to the interior of Russia. The actual number of Jews, who were found living in Poland in 1945, was less than 50,000, the greater part of whom had been liberated, half dead,

from the concentration camps. The percentage who had survived "underground," by joining resistance groups or by obtaining Aryan identity papers, was infinitely small.

In Count Raczynski's letter the good, kind Home Army appears in an even more favorable light. It seems that, though on some unspecified occasion Jewish personalities in the Ghetto had declined military assistance, the Home Army did all that it could during the actual rebellion. Is it not curious that, during the four or five weeks' Hell of the blazing ghetto, life should have continued, normal and undisturbed, for the rest of Warsaw? Yet the Germans used only 2,504 men, of whom little more than half were Germans and none fully trained soldiers. In August, 1944, when the Poles themselves rebelled, the Home Army kept the equivalent of several German divisions occupied in Warsaw for two months and with next to no help from the Allies, Eastern or Western. I would be the last to belittle that achievement, but is not the discrepancy between the two rebellions obvious. In the Ambassador's own words, "these facts speak for themselves."

GERALD REITLINGER.

* * *

DEAR SIR,—Before answering my three critics, I want to correct two inaccuracies connected with my article "Need They Have Died?" The first is that I did not leave Poland during the war but in 1936, when as a Jew I was unable to enter a Polish university and had to leave for abroad to continue with my studies. The mistake is due to a misunderstanding, not uncommon in a long-distance telephone conversation, between one of the editors and myself. The second inaccuracy is in my translating "Narodowe Sily Zbrojne" as the "Polish Armed Forces" instead of as the "National Armed Forces." (Mr. Blit chooses to call them the "Nationalist Armed Forces", but nationalist in Polish is "nacjonalista" and not "narodowy.") The second inaccuracy is thus due to a pardonable slip of the pen and not to evil intention on my part, as Mr. Blit, for want of better arguments, implies.

Mr. Blit accuses me of presenting facts "which are either dubious or downright false." And to prove his charge he triumphantly announces that "they were

mainly compiled by the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, which is controlled by Stalinists." Without compunction I plead guilty: I have been using material in possession of the Warsaw Historical Institute, but I still fail to see why that should mean that I share the views of the Communist heads of the Institute on the causes and course of the Jewish tragedy in Poland. On the contrary, Mr. Blit, whose Bund Party was fanatically opposed to Zionism and until the very end, in the teeth of the most horrible evidence to the contrary, tried to convince Jewish workers that the Polish proletariat regarded them as their brothers, is much closer to Professor Berl Mark than I am. The only essential difference between Mark's line on the Jewish tragedy in Poland and Mr. Blit's is that the first exaggerates the rôle of the Communists and Mr. Blit exaggerates the rôle of his helpless Socialist friends. Both, moreover, seem to me more interested in pursuing their Menshevik-Bolshevik feud than in facing the truth about the annihilation of their people.

However, even this reproach of Mr. Blit's is undeserved. I have based my judgment on facts contained not only in the publications of the J H I, but also in those of the Kibbutz of Ghetto Survivors near Haifa, and the studies published by the Yad Washem Remembrance Authority of Jerusalem, an official body set up to study the destruction of European Jewry. Furthermore, I have relied on numerous eyewitness accounts gathered from survivors in the immediate post-war period in Germany and later in Israel.

Let me now try and answer Mr. Blit's specific charges as regards my use of "dubious or downright false" facts. To prove that the Polish Government in London did its best to help the Jews of Poland, he quotes Dr. Feiner's report on the receipt of some £10,000 from the London Government Representation in Poland. A most impressive sum indeed for the purpose of saving the still surviving hundreds of thousands of Jews! He is particularly angry with me for writing that the Home Army Command refused to supply arms to the Jewish military organizations in the Vilno, Bialystok and Warsaw Ghettos. In the case of Vilno, Abba Kovner, one of the leaders of the United Jewish Partisan Organization in the ghetto, is alive in Israel and that is what he affirms, and he is

backed by other survivors. In the case of Bialystok, there are the letters and diary of Tenenboim-Tamarov, the leader of the ghetto uprising, published in Israel and describing in detail the cynicism of the Home Army commanders with whom he was negotiating for arms. In the case of Warsaw, even Mr. Blit accepts the list of arms supplied by the Home Army to the ghetto fighters as given by me: 10 pistols with a small amount of ammunition in December 1942, and 50 revolvers, 50 hand grenades and 4 kilograms of explosives at the beginning of 1943. Even to Mr. Blit this does not seem a very impressive amount, for at the end of a very confused and emotional passage he has to admit rather lamely: "I am certain that more could have been done by the Home Army to provide the Ghetto fighters with arms than actually happened." Yet he does not hesitate to state that most of the arms used by the Warsaw Ghetto fighters, variously estimated as having numbered between 600 and 3,000, "came through the Polish government in London, and the patriotic Polish underground inside the country."

As for my remark that most of the arms supplied by the Home Army to the Warsaw Ghetto fighters were faulty, my authority is a letter sent by the Jewish Fighting Organization Command to the Home Army Command on March 13th, 1943. The original is in the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw. Here are the relevant passages:

... Of the 49 pieces given us only 36 are usable ... To provide machines [i.e. weapons, my note] without ammunition creates the impression of cynical gloating over our fate and confirms the opinion that the poison of anti-Semitism still pervades the circles which rule Poland ... We ask for at least 150 handgrenades, 50 pistols, 10 rifles, a few thousand rounds of ammunition of all calibres ... Commander of the Jewish Fighting Organization Kalacki.

(The name is, of course, a pseudonym.)

Mr. Blit's use of Bernard Goldstein's book *The Stars Bear Witness* to confound me is particularly interesting. Here is what Goldstein has to say in the same book of his experiences during the Warsaw Rising of 1944:

On the first day of the uprising (August 1) the military prison on Dzika Street was captured and all the prisoners freed. Most of them were Jews, mainly from Greece, Hungary and Rumania,

with a few from Poland. They were all slave laborers whom the Germans had been using to tear down the ruins of the Ghetto.

I must confess that the attitude of the military command of the uprising towards these most unfortunate of the unfortunate Jews was far from proper, even considering the difficult times. They were formed into labor brigades and immediately sent into the front lines to dig trenches under the artillery fire of the enemy. Toughs and hoodlums taunted and tormented them.

The *Monitor Polski*, the official government gazette, published a communiqué abrogating the laws which the Germans had introduced during the occupation. They forgot one detail—to nullify the Nuremberg laws against the Jews.

Mr. Blit argues that because the Polish Government sent notes to the British and American Governments drawing their attention to the Nazis' extermination of Polish, and indeed European, Jewry, most of its members could not at the same time agree with the results of the Nazi policy. Certainly the Socialists and other liberal elements in the London Government, which exerted no real control over the Polish Armed Forces and the Home Army, were honestly opposed to the Nazi "Final Solution." But the dominating elements in the London Government saw in its official declarations and notes on behalf of Polish Jews an excellent weapon of propaganda to win sympathy for the Polish cause in general, and discredited semi-fascist Polish politicians in particular, in this country and the United States. Dr. I. Schwarzbart, a moderate Zionist and now a member of the Jewish World Congress, who represented Polish Jewry on the Polish National Council in London, has stated in his so far published papers that the officials responsible for Jewish affairs in the London Government concealed from him telegrams and messages sent by Jewish resistance leaders in Poland, while a number of the highest dignitaries made it quite clear to him that in their opinion Hitler was saving the Poles from doing an unpleasant job themselves. When he was finally allowed to address Poles and Polish Jews in the B B C Polish service, the official underground sent word that they did not want to hear "that Jew."

In replying to Count Raczyński's letter, I wish to make it clear that I have no

reason to believe that he personally was in any way involved in the policies of the Jew-haters and *Realpolitik*ers of the government he served. But I must also state that the manner in which he refers to my article in his letter to you and the Editor of *The Manchester Guardian* cannot but remind me and other surviving Polish Jews of the series of trials staged just before the war against a number of Polish Jews who dared criticize Polish anti-Semitism and the spread of Nazi ideas in Polish life. They were charged with having committed the crime of "insulting the honor of the Polish nation" and given stiff prison sentences.

To Count Raczynski my charges against the Home Army appear to be so monstrous that he must be really ignorant of what happened in Nazi-occupied Poland. Moshe Kahanowitz, a former partisan leader in Eastern Poland, in his study of the reasons "Why no Separate Jewish Partisan Movement was Established During World War II," which your readers will find in *Yad Vashem Studies on the European Jewish Catastrophe and Resistance*, Vol. I, published by the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem last year, goes much further than I do:

The A.K. [Home Army] refused to accept Jews in its ranks. Moreover, one of its objectives was to exterminate the Jewish survivors who sought refuge in the forests, in the villages and other hideouts. The A.L. [People's Army], on the other hand, did accept Jews, but its field of operations was restricted to a few districts and the number of its units was small. The hatred of the Poles for the Jews by far exceeded that of any other Eastern European nation. Most Poles welcomed Hitler's anti-Jewish campaign, which they hoped would solve the Jewish problem radically. The dream which Polish anti-Semites had cherished for generations of "Poland without Jews" had been realized. In that region of the forests in which the A.K. operated not a single Jewish fugitive from the Ghettos remained alive. The number of those collaborating with the Germans was many times larger than those in the Soviet areas.

Count Raczynski's defence of Professor Stronski is most curious. Will he deny that he was only second to Roman Dmowski as theorist of the National Democratic Party, the party which introduced into Polish life anti-Semitism as a political and moral

Weltanschauung long before Hitler even dreamed of writing *Mein Kampf*? As for his partly Jewish descent, so was Torquemada's, and there are good reasons to believe that Heydrich, the executioner of European Jewry, had a Jewish grandmother.

I now come to what he calls "this fantastic and malevolent tale": my report of the cynical offer made by the Home Army Command to evacuate the Warsaw Ghetto fighters to Volhynia to fight the Soviet forces. This offer was made to I. Cukierman, a left-wing Zionist now in Israel, who acted as liaison agent between the Jewish Fighting Organization in the Warsaw Ghetto and the Home Army. The minutes of his statement made at a session of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw in May 1948, i.e. when the Institute was by no means under Communist control, are of course available. Count Raczynski's argument that such an offer could not have been made because "the Home Army did not fight against Russian troops" will not hold water. In the first place, the offer was cynical in the extreme, because the people who made it knew very well that the Ghetto fighters would not abandon the mass of their defenceless parents, brothers and sisters whom they had inspired to rise. In the second place, it was consistent with the general line pursued by Polish anti-Semites since 1918, which was to accuse the Jews of being a Bolshevik fifth-column inside Poland.

I now come to Mr. Lowenthal's letter. If my reply to it is inadequate, the reason for it is to be found in the devious reasoning of its author, which I am not always able to follow. Thus Mr. Lowenthal is ready to agree with me that "the Nazis secured the acquiescence of the mass of the Polish people and varying degrees of collaboration on the part of an important minority for their policy" of exterminating Polish Jewry, but is up in arms because I say that "the bulk of the Polish people found it perfectly feasible to sympathize and even co-operate with the Nazis in the extermination of their Jewish fellow-citizens." I have looked up the Oxford Dictionary and found that "bulk" means "mass, the greater part." I therefore fail to see why "most students" would agree with my first sentence but find me "tainted with such hatred" because of the second. As for Mr. Lowenthal's charge that I pur-

posefully blurred "relevant distinctions" between actual murderers and moral accomplices, I most definitely reject it. I did not accuse the Poles of having taken, as a people, an active part in the butchering of Jews as the Polish Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Latvians and Rumanians had, but of having in their majority behaved in such a way that tens of thousands of Polish Jews who might have survived as "Aryans", in hiding or in partisan detachments, met with a horrible death. Moreover, it is my belief, and the belief of most surviving Polish Jews, that by their implacable hatred and frequent gloating over the fate of their Jewish compatriots, the mass of the Polish people helped the Nazis to break the spirit of their Jewish victims and made many die an undignified death. To argue, as Mr. Blit does, that the beastliness of the bulk of the Polish people was exclusively the work of the Nazis was proved false after the war, when Jewish survivors emerged from hiding, or came back from Nazi death-camps and the camps or shelter of Soviet Russia. They were received with such taunts as: "And they said that all of them had gone up in smoke," an absolute refusal to return Jewish property, the murder of hundreds of Jews often saved from the Nazis by other Poles at the risk of their own lives, and the Kielce pogrom.

It is of these people that I said that "generally regarded in this country as the natural allies of the West," they are still

moved by blind Jew-hatred. According to an eye-witness report by an obviously sympathetic British businessman of the Poznan demonstrations published in *The New Statesman* at the time, the crowd shouted when the police opened fire that the policemen were Russians and Jews, because Polish policemen could never fire at other Poles. An obvious lie, for there were no Russian or Jewish policemen, showing how deep the poison of Jew-hatred has entered the soul of the Polish masses. The Poznan events were followed by a wave of anti-Semitism directed against the remaining 50,000 Jews and once again demonstrated the depth of the Polish guilt complex. Nobody, of course, can prevent Mr. Lowenthal from regarding and treating these people as the natural allies of the West against Communism, but neither does anybody give him the right to clothe his political reasons, which have made him into a most persuasive champion of German rearmament, in bogus highmindedness. As a Polish Jew I feel that even thirteen years after the end of the massacre—the massacre of European Jewry did not end fifteen years ago, as Mr. Lowenthal seems to think—it is still my duty to let the world know how my people died alone and betrayed, and by doing so save them from the unjust judgment already given by certain historians that they died as they did because of fatalism and lack of physical courage.

REUBEN AINSZTEIN.

books and authors

Dr. Zhivago

By MEIR MINDLIN

DR. ZHIVAGO, by BORIS PASTERNAK. (Translated by Max Hayward and Manya Harari). N. Y. Pantheon Books. 1958, 510 pp., \$5.

THIS NOVEL is certainly the most important prose work to come out of Russia in the last fifty years, and should be read by everyone interested in literature for the pleasure to be gotten out of it and to make the acquaintance of a new accession to the canon of Russian classics. In this book Pasternak bears witness to his age, the terrible age of the Russian Revolution and its aftermath and gives us a panoramic view of almost Tolstoyan dimensions. He is not so much interested in the makers of that history as in those who experienced it and suffered it, those who lived out their lives meaningfully *in spite of* the great upheaval and not because of it. His hero, the physician and poet Yury Zhivago is the type of the *izgoy*, the superfluous man, the outsider, at a time when non-commitment to the slogans of the day made one's life superfluous from the point of view of the régime. Like many intellectuals at the time, Zhivago welcomed the February and October revolutions, but he was soon disillusioned. Speaking to Lara, his great love and his second wife, he explains:

But it turns out that those who inspired the revolution aren't at home in anything except change and turmoil: that's their native element; they aren't happy with anything that's less than on a world scale. For them, transitional periods, words in the making, are an end in themselves. They aren't trained for anything else, they don't know about anything except that. And do you know why there is this incessant whirl of never-ending preparations? It's because they haven't any real capacities, they are

ungifted. Man is born to live, not to prepare for life. Life itself—the gift of life — is such a breathtakingly serious thing! — Why substitute this childish harlequinade of adolescent fantasies, these schoolboy escapades.

As the childish harlequinade turns more and more into a *danse macabre*, as Russia is devastated in the Civil War and bled by the subsequent struggle for power, Yury withdraws increasingly, stops practicing medicine, turns into a down and out semi-bohemian, till he dies in 1929 or '30 (Stalin's consolidation of power), suffocated as he tries to force open a window of the tram he is travelling in—a marvellously symbolical chapter. In addition to the revolution, Civil War and the 'twenties, we are given a glimpse of pre-revolutionary Russia and the First World War, as well as an epilogue consisting of talk between Zhivago's friends, Gordon and Dudorov, which brings the story to 1948 (or 1953—Stalin's death) and includes the finding of Zhivago's and Lara's daughter who had been a *bezprizornaya*, one of the orphaned waifs who roamed the countryside in gangs in the early 'twenties and 'thirties. There is an appendix of 25 poems by Zhivago which have a certain relation to the novel, and many of which are written on themes from the Gospel stories.

The translation of the novel itself is excellent and Pasternak's imagery comes through very well; the task must have been no easy one, and the translators' protestations of inadequacy are exaggerated. The poems are another matter, for the literal translations provided do not stand on their own and could only serve as a trot to the originals; surely some English poet could have been enlisted in the effort. The poems do read a little better after one has read the novel and knows the background. (Pasternak is Russia's outstanding living poet; though he has published very little

in the last thirty years or so for obvious reasons, his poems circulate in manuscript.)

The love story between Yuri and Lara is a great one, and readers should not be deterred by the occasional slush, for aside from the fact that Russian lovers may really talk that way, its significance should not be lost: the necessity and meaning of full communication in love.

FOR A major work of fiction, "Dr. Zhivago" is very flawed. Coincidence is the mainspring of the plot, and while every individual's life may have a plentiful quota of this element, in a story on this scale it undermines verisimilitude, as does the big dose of melodrama. A more serious defect is the slowness with which the book gets going: not until we have read a third of it do we begin to care about the characters at all, and until then nothing is done to arouse tension or curiosity. This first third is made up of three separate elements that never fuse: impressionistic descriptions of places (usually lovely); Zhivago/Pasternak's theories and ideas; and the early life of the characters, which is very scrappy and spotty here, very weak as narrative, as already mentioned. There is no central consciousness or "point of view" until Yuri takes over later on. Since the book comes to life most convincingly in the second third, there may be a significant reason for this failure. Perhaps Pasternak did not feel free to portray the pre-revolutionary period as he felt it, for how he felt it comes out clearly:

I remember quite well how it was in my childhood. I can still remember a time when we all accepted the peaceful outlook of the last century. It was taken for granted that you listened to reason, that it was right and natural to do what your conscience told you. For a man to die by the hand of another was a rare, and exceptional event, something quite out of the ordinary run. Murders happened in plays, newspapers and detective stories, not in everyday life.

Or in another place, when Lara asks Yuri about a revolutionary soon to be cast off by the bolsheviks:

"But is there no escape for him? Couldn't he run away?"

"Where could he run to, Larissa Fyodorovna? You could do that in the old days, under the tsars. But just you try nowadays!"

The glimpses of working-class life given in this first third, which should set the scene and tone for the revolution are inadequate, though later on, there are excellent portrayals of simple people. This first part is altogether reminiscent of Andrey Biely's novel *St. Petersburg*, which dealt with the 1905 revolution.

A number of important relationships in the book are not sufficiently developed, are given in a sort of shorthand. Thus we do not know enough about the relationship between Lara and her first husband, Pasha Antipov, nor do we understand early enough why he leaves her, which is the clue to his becoming a revolutionary. Lara herself is insufficiently characterized and Yuri only comes to life in the second third of the book. One can imagine the physical image of Lara being very vivid in Pasternak's mind, but he has not communicated it. This is also true of Zhivago's first wife, Tonya. The minor characters, on the other hand, are all sketched in very vividly by the hand of a master. However, Gordon and Dudorov, Zhivago's friends, are merely mouthpieces for Pasternak's ideas.

These ideas range over a very wide field, from art in general and literature in particular, through the revolution, to the Jewish question. We know explicitly that Pasternak rejects Marxism, dialectical materialism, the revolution. At the heart of his world of ideas is a sort of Gospel Christianity, and this is his (or Zhivago's) great positive refuge in the alien world in which he lives. It strikes one as a very amateur sort of Christianity, not only because it is non-institutional, and "aesthetic" in Kierkegaard's sense. (To an interviewer he described himself as "almost an atheist.") One feels that this development towards a Gospel Christianity is at least as much a negative reaction to the destructive materialism of communist Russia as it is an intrinsically positive impulse, not only because it is so heterodox and contradictory

(for him every conception is immaculate, i.e. there is no original sin), but also because of the elements emphasized. For Pasternak, Christianity seems to be the first humanism, Jesus the liberator of the human personality; history begins with him:

"It has always been assumed that the most important things in the Gospels are the ethical teachings and commandments. But for me the most important thing is the fact that Christ speaks in parables taken from daily life, that he explains the truth in terms of everyday reality. The idea which underlines this is that communion between mortals is immortal, and that the whole of life is symbolic because the whole of it has meaning. . . . From that moment there were neither gods nor peoples, there was only man."

THIS IS Zhivago's Uncle Kolya speaking, for Pasternak has divided his ideas among several characters. Together with this notion of Christ as the Artist, there is a more convincing nature mysticism, very beautifully conveyed by Pasternak the prose poet; a sense of harmony in and with nature that is always tied to a most specific perception and observation of the natural world. Pasternak studied music with Scriabin as a young man, and it is possible that the composer's mystical theory, uniting aesthetics, religion and cosmogony (a sort of theosophy), has had a lasting influence.

Pasternak's Christianity brings us to his attitude to Jews, Judaism and the Jewish Question. Pasternak himself was born a Jew, of course, the son of the painter Leonid Pasternak, and despite the son's knowledge of and love for the Russian Orthodox liturgy (the book and the poems are studded with it) I doubt that he has been baptized; if he had he would hardly say he was "almost an atheist." Now what Pasternak has to say on the Jewish question (and it is a good deal and is distributed among several characters) is a very old story, and a very irritating one to the Jewish reader, for here Pasternak the poet drops into the most tarnished, the rustiest of clichés: the assimilationist thesis. The

day after Yury and his Jewish friend have seen a Cossack humiliating and beating up an old Jew during the War, Gordon says to Zhivago:

When the Gospels say that in the Kingdom of God there are neither Jews nor Gentiles, do they mean that all are equal in the sight of God? I don't believe it means only that — that was known already — it was known to the Greek philosophers and the Roman moralists and the Hebrew Prophets. What the Gospels tell us is that in this new way of life and of communion, which is born of the heart and which is called the Kingdom of God, there are no nations, but only persons. . . . The ordinary run of politicians—people who aren't interested in life as a whole, in the world as a whole, the sort of people with restricted minds who like restriction for its own sake . . . are pleased . . . to get everybody thinking and talking about a nicely restricted group—the more restricted the better—a people, especially if it's a small people, and best of all if it's having a bad time, so that there can be plenty of judging and weighing and settling and deciding, and getting pity to pay dividends. Well, now what more perfect example can you have of this mentality than the Jews? Their national idea has forced them, century after century, to be a people and nothing but a people—and the extraordinary thing is that they have been chained to this deadening task all through the centuries when all the rest of the world was being delivered from it by a new force which had come out of their own midst! Isn't that extraordinary! How can you account for it? Just think!—This glorious holiday from mediocrity, from the dreary, boring constriction of everyday life, was first achieved on their soil, proclaimed in their language, belonged to their race! And they actually saw and heard it and let it go! How could they do it? . . . In whose interests is this voluntary martyrdom? Who stands to gain by keeping it going, so that all these innocent old men and women and children, all these clever, kind, humane people should go on being mocked and beaten up throughout the centuries? Why don't [the intellectual leaders of the Jewish people] dismiss this army which is forever fighting and being massacred nobody knows for what? Why don't they say to them: "That's enough, stop now. Don't hold on to your identity, don't all get together in a crowd. Disperse.

Be with all the rest. You are the first and best Christians in the world . . ."

Now isn't this an extraordinary thing for a believer in *personality* to say? To ask someone else, a whole people at that, to surrender *its* personality, its identity. Of course no Russian or Englishman would think of casting off his identity; this is a specialized product of Jewish self-hatred. What is particularly obtuse morally is the implication that the Jews, by clinging to their identity, are guilty of their own misfortunes and disasters. This is driven home rather unpleasantly in one of the poems, "The Miracle," which retells the Gospel parable of the barren fig tree that withered at Jesus' command (Matthew 21:18-20 and Mark 11:12-21—but see the Zionist answer in Luke 13:6-9). If I read the poem rightly, then Pasternak interprets the Nazi holocaust—*The doomed tree trembled/ Like a lightning conductor struck by lightning,/ And was consumed to ashes—as a miracle, a miracle is God.* Not a very charitable view, I should say.

ONE is also reminded of Bialik's monograph on Leonid Pasternak where the painter is praised for having produced two art books on Jewish subjects, and which ends with an account of how Jews have given their best talents to the secular cultures in which they lived, these talents giving nothing in return to their people, but here: *Last season's fruit is eaten/ And the fullfed beast shall kick the empty pail.*

There is also a political aspect to the book, though there are those who wish to deny this. I don't see how they can. The Soviet literary bureaucrat who said that the book presents the revolution as a great crime in Russian history was not exaggerating so very much; Pasternak's intention is certainly not political, but his powerful and convincing picture of the revolution can lead one to political conclusions. I can hardly imagine the book being published in the Soviet Union, even in an abridged version: it simply destroys the myth of the revolution. As Yuri is told: "You are a mockery of that whole world, an insult to it." And what of the following:

According to our present-day logic, once they have settled accounts with Strelnikov, Lara's and Katya's [i.e. his wife's and his child's] lives are also threatened. . . .

It was the disease, the revolutionary madness of the age: that in his heart everyone was utterly different from his words and the outward appearance he assumed. No one had a clear conscience. Everyone had some reason to feel that he was guilty of everything, that he was an impostor, an undetected criminal. The slightest pretext was enough to launch the imagination on an orgy of self-torture. People slandered and accused themselves, not only out of terror but of their own free will, from a morbidly destructive impulse, in a state of metaphysical trance, carried away by that passion for self-condemnation which cannot be checked once it has been given free rein. . . .

Men who are not free, he thought, always idealize their bondage. So it was in the Middle Ages, and the Jesuits always played on this. Yuri could not bear the political mysticism of the Soviet intelligentsia, though it was the very thing they regarded as the highest of their achievements and described in the language of the day as "the spiritual top-flight of the age" . . .

The great majority of us are required to live a life of constant, systematic duplicity. Your health is bound to be affected if day after day, you say the opposite of what you feel, if you grovel before what you dislike and rejoice at what brings you nothing but misfortune. . . . I found it painful to listen to you, Nicky, when you told us how you were re-educated and grew up in jail. It was like listening to a circus horse describing how it broke itself in.

The book ends on an optimistic (post-Stalin, "thawed") note, with Zhivago's friends feeling that "although the enlightenment and liberation which had been expected to come after the war had not come with victory, a presage of freedom was in the air. . . ." That presage of freedom is not likely to make itself really felt in the publication of "Zhivago" for a very long time yet.

In conclusion, a word about the novel as such. I understand from Russian-reading friends and from translations that Pasternak is very much of a twentieth-century poet. One cannot say the same of the

novel. In form it is a nineteenth-century novel, and this leaves one with a slightly uneasy feeling, as one would feel about a work by a modern composer written in a strictly Mozartian idiom, or a modern painting done in the style of Leonardo. And yet there is a peculiar Russian logic and irony in this too, as if a nineteenth-century classic writer were leaning over the great gulf to take a long and penetrating look at his country in our time.

The Real Dream

By PAUL GOODMAN

DESCRIPTION OF A STRUGGLE, a collection of Franz Kafka. Translated by Tania and James Stern. Schocken 1958. \$4.50.

IN *Description of a Struggle*, a dreamy narrative that Kafka wrote when he was twenty, he is already adept and committed in the humoristic vein of post-romantic capricious fantasy, one of the manners of Heine. This capricious tone, as it gets to be expert and weary, is most associated with, I guess, Vienna. Richard Strauss is its best voice; and certainly it is what Musil, another fine Viennese humorist, makes us understand as the appropriate tone of Franz Josef's empire. Keeping this background in mind, it is interesting to see with what slight alterations Kafka in a few years transforms it into his high and original style. I want to call attention to a key passage in this early piece.

Description begins as a realistic account of an erotically-tinged intimacy leading rapidly to embarrassment and the fear of rejection; soon the humorous fantasy takes over, with the kind of sign-language of incest and castration that the young man could still write unconsciously in 1903 (though the content is almost the same as in *The Judgment* and *The Trial*, ten years later); finally, in traditional caprice-style, the humor broadens into fantastic horse-play, expressing one's own victory, and the section ends, "I left him there on the stones [with a wounded knee] and whistled

down a few vultures . . . to guard him." The second section then begins as follows:

I walked on, unperturbed. But since, as a pedestrian, I dreaded the effort of climbing the mountainous road, I let it become gradually flatter, let it slope down into a valley in the distance. . . . Because I love pinewoods, I went through woods of this kind, and since I like gazing silently up at the stars, the stars appeared slowly in the sky, as is their wont. . . . I caused to rise an enormously high mountain whose plateau overgrown with brushwood bordered on the sky. I could see quite clearly the little ramifications of the highest branches. This sight, ordinary as it may be, made me so happy that I, as a small bird on a twig of those distant scrubby bushes, forgot to let the moon come up. It lay already behind, no doubt angry at the delay. . . . And suddenly the moon itself appeared.

This passage is remarkable and startling. What has happened is that the young man has suddenly invented for himself surrealism. In the beginning section, working in the framework of a purely literary and not very interesting "real world," he tried to liven it up by constructing fantastic and humorous events. Now suddenly he has turned to a real actuality, oneself fantasizing and willing the fantasies. He rings the changes on this, and soon he sees that the real fantasies have a will of their own, they even get angry. And finally they begin to act on their own, whether he wants them to or not. This is the method of surrealism.

From the interior of the forest, I heard the approaching crashes of collapsing trees. Now I could have thrown myself down on the moss to sleep, but since I feared to sleep on the ground, I crept up a tree — the trunk sliding quickly down the rings formed by my arms and legs. . . . I went hastily to sleep while a squirrel of my whim sat stiff-tailed at the trembling end of the branch.

It is the stiff-tailed squirrel, which is actually willed, that makes us see by contrast that the scene is a compelled fantasy, it is surreal. Now this is one element in the manner of *The Trial* and *The Castle*: he cannot help dreaming out this dream, even though he is inventing it step by step.

THERE IS a contrasting element of his high style that is also illustrated in this book of sketches and fragments. Consider the little piece about *Poseidon*: the administrator of the waters is so occupied with keeping his books and accounts that he has never had time to sail and has hardly seen the oceans.

Paraphrased thus, this is another stale variety of fantastic humor: sophomoric satire; indeed, give him buttons and call him a Count and he is a rear-admiral of the Dual Empire. And one can have fantastic fun with bureaucracy, in the manner of the Captain of Koepenik. Yet this is not at all the effect of Kafka's *Poseidon*. Rather—remarkably, for he eschews any description — what we carry away is a sense of the vastness of the earth's waters, and, touchingly, that one would have to be a very busy and great man to keep account of them. Just so, in two long novels, in *The Great Wall of China* and a dozen other pieces, like *Blumfeld, The Refusal*, and *The Conscription of Troops* in the present collection, Kafka delineates the unbelievable features of bureaucracy, yet there is no "satire." Rather, he convinces us, first, that "the disharmony of this world is mathematical," and very immense it is; and then, that the bureaucracy is in us, it answers to our deep needs, for we are dogs—even the young women from remote villages come in their best finery to the hour of conscription, though they are only beaten and rejected for their pains. As if he said, "Who can afford the luxury of making fun of it? We are too engaged." Lofty satire attacks its target from a position of inner security and indignation that Kafka never enjoyed; humorous mockery strikes its spiteful blows safely cowering, but Kafka was too earnest, and too loving, to take cover in humor.

(Of course I do not mean that Kafka is not comic. From the point of view of eternity, all disharmony is comic and people are ridiculous; and Kafka often had a good glimpse from that point of view. We know that he used to become hilarious when reading some of his little paragraphs; his readers generally wear a quieter smile, for it's not so rich as all that.)

So in the fantastic humor of the post-romantics, Kafka again doggedly recovers the actuality of the real world. Yet it is very like a dream; it is like the compelled dream that the surrealist finds when he exercises his method. Then we may say that it is by combining these two opposite ways of handling the humorous that we can reconstruct the high style of Kafka: first, the humorist turns upon his real action of fantasizing till he comes to that in it which he does not will but which wills itself, the dream he is compelled to dream; and second, he finds that the content of this absurd fantasy is your actual world, in careful detail. Maybe sometimes he starts with the second, by worrying a small detail of reality, and then he finds that he is having a terrible bad dream, wide-awake too.

Critics have said that Kafka starts with a fantastic premise, and once that is granted, everything follows with a meticulous realism. But that cannot be, for the effect of it would be fantasy-and-science-fiction, not Kafka. The case is that the premise is not fantastic but actual—man is a bug, a mouse, a dog; and the great Ape in captivity is a man—it is all meticulously realistic; and oh Lord, the whole of it is an absurd fantasy. Hilarious.

LET ME follow one further step this tack of Kafka's relation to his fantasizing. It is evident that in him the normal function of fantasy was both very powerful and tightly reined in. (One would say that he reined it in, not to go off altogether.) He cannot allow his freakish symbols to live their own life and go their own way; he must check them back soon, and finally continuously, to the actuality. Now I think this explains why there are almost no Kafka stories that are simply fictions, with self-standing *personae*, and moving with the easy-going good-enough probability of free fictions. To Kafka that probability is not good enough; he needs it also to be more *true*, in the sense of more actual. But then he is fascinated and frozen by the actuality he finds in it, and he cannot lightly think away from it to the next episode.

Here we have one more explanation, I think, (I have elsewhere given several others) why he left so many fragments, so much discontinuous in the middle and unfinished in the end. The fantasy image becomes too actual and he becomes fascinated because something is still concealed in the actual; yet it is only the actual, it is boring, and he leaves off. The present volume has again several fragments, as well as some beautifully finished small pieces. *Blumfeld* is typical: the original fiction is delightful, probable, profound, psychologically true—an elderly orderly functionary is lonely, and he suddenly finds he has the company of two neat jolly bouncing balls. He is embarrassed by them, he squelches them in the closet, and when he goes off to the office, he tries to use the neighborhood kids, who are also difficult to handle, to get rid of them. At the office

there are, again, his two worthless and bothersome assistants. But they are too close to the actuality; Kafka bogs down in describing their tricks, and drops the whole story. Meantime, the proper next episode: confronting the results of the plan to get rid of the balls—this he never gets to. To be sure, the present narrative, as it is, conveys a salutary truth, namely "There's nothing different after all;" but this newsy gospel it conveys too dryly.

On the other hand, Kafka's close-checked handling of fantastic humor does give his lovely prose one of its finest and quietly stunning forward motions: we are bobbing along in the flow becoming diffuse, a little vague, a little wandering, of fantasy and fantasy-confabulation, and we quietly drop the infinite distance to what is only too real.

The Kibbutz Under Analysis

By BEN HALPERN

KIBBUTZ, VENTURE IN UTOPIA, by MELFORD E. SPIRO. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956, xii and 266 pp., \$4.50; CHILDREN OF THE KIBBUTZ, by MELFORD E. SPIRO. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958, xix and 500 pp., \$10.00.

THERE HAS been a remarkable abundance of research reports on the kibbutz in Israel in recent years. Apart from numerous individual articles in technical journals and in collective volumes, there have been the special sections of *Social Problems* (Autumn, 1957) and of the *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* (July, 1958) and the projected series of volumes by Melford E. Spiro, of which the first two have already appeared.

No less remarkable, however, has been the recognition by some of the authors of these studies that special and quite complex problems are involved in playing the role of an expert on social issues, especially in regard to Israel, and, above all, in regard to the kibbutz. One researcher, the

psychiatrist Dr. Gerald Caplan, was so sharply impressed by his experience as an outside expert in Israel that he has thought it worthwhile to reformulate his observations and conclusions on several different occasions and to recommend them to the attention of students who intend to practice his craft. Two other researchers, Dr. Eva Rosenfeld and Dr. Richard D. Schwartz, felt that the role of an expert studying the kibbutz was sufficiently problematical to make this subject their theme in the group of six papers on the Israel communes recently printed in the *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*.

What is the nature of the problem involved? Dr. Caplan stresses the unexpectedly ambivalent attitudes of the Israelis toward experts, while Drs. Rosenfeld and Schwartz note the unexpected complexity and involvement, if not bias, which often develops in the experts' attitudes towards Israel and the kibbutz. Both deserve some further comment.

Dr. Caplan came to Israel in order to

organize psychiatric services for the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of the new state. As a psychiatrist of the new school, he was fully prepared for special efforts, not only on the rational but on the non-rational plane, in persuading the public and the professionals to accept his innovations. He found an unexpected degree of openness to new suggestions. The community included a substantial group of practitioners with psychiatric training or background and there was a general feeling that psychiatric services were badly needed. Moreover, the failure of the Mandate government to provide for this need in earlier years left a free field for new plans. The Ministry was able to set up a type of preventive mental health service so progressive that it was still controversial in Great Britain, where Dr. Caplan was trained.

In the course of time, however, Dr. Caplan found the field was not quite so free and unencumbered as he at first believed. A change in the Israel Cabinet led to his own departure from the Ministry, and he became aware of complications he had not anticipated. Upon analysis he realized that there were rival factions in the Israel medical profession, and that his choice of assistants had identified him with one and not another of them. Also, he began to understand that the welcoming atmosphere that had greeted him upon arrival had its hidden complexities. He was welcomed not only as an expert, but also as a Jew and a Zionist—which implied an expectation that he would not remain an outside expert but become a settler, fully identified with the country; and the attitude of colleagues toward one who might (and should) become a permanent worker was bound to be subtly different from the attitude toward a consultant who certainly would (and should) leave after a limited period of service.

Dr. Caplan's interpretation of the difficulties of being an expert is based on his experience in the Israel civil service, not on his studies of the kibbutz, which have also been quite intensive. Certain aspects of the ambivalence of Israel attitudes toward expert advice are particular-

ly prominent in the kibbutzim. Like Israelis in general, but in greater degree, the kibbutzim at the outset lacked an established tradition and were willing to experiment with new scientific ideas. But like Israelis in general, only in greater degree, the kibbutzim are ready to accept scientific suggestions mainly when they indicate possible methods for accomplishing their own unprecedented aims; they are not at all ready to accept negative scientific conclusions which find that their unprecedented aims and methods are doomed to failure and should be abandoned. The point is well illustrated in the reply given by a Jewish representative under questioning by one of the many expert commissions that investigated the National Home. He was asked how far the Zionists and other Jewish colonizing agencies followed the advice of geologists in seeking underground water in Palestine. "We follow their advice," he said, "when they tell us where to dig in order to find water; we don't listen to them if they tell us not to dig because we won't find water."

ONE OF THE major difficulties in serving as an expert in Israel, particularly in regard to the kibbutzim, is that the aims and undertakings are unprecedented; Israelis and kibbutzniks consequently expect experts to recommend that their aims and undertakings be abandoned as impossible. This expectation is based on long experience. In the very beginning, the kibbutz was criticized by economists and planning experts as a social and economic fantasy that had little chance of succeeding. The experts recommended that if the Jewish Agency must experiment with the kibbutz at all, it should at least construct the communal dwelling places in such a manner that they could readily be converted into homes for individual families when the kibbutz was eventually liquidated. The kibbutzim, during the succeeding generation, proved these expert prognostications to be mistaken, and were confirmed in their disposition not to listen to experts who, having never encountered anything quite like the kibbutz in their previous ex-

perience, found it easier to declare it impossible than to understand it in its own terms. When a new wave of experts came to observe the kibbutz after the State of Israel was established, the members of the kibbutzim anticipated that these specialists, too, would pronounce the kibbutz impossible; and they were prepared in advance to ignore such judgments.

Dr. Rosenfeld emphasizes not the complexities of the Israeli attitude to experts but the complex involvement of the expert in the problems of Israel and particularly of the kibbutz. As a result, the expert is led to carry his investigations and judgments beyond the usual limits of cautious, objective research and to raise metascientific issues concerning the ultimate justification and viability of the subject of his studies.

As she points out, Israel and the kibbutz do not represent a location for field work which falls within the expected range of assignments normally suggested to young scholars. To go to Israel to study the kibbutz implies some special motivation on the part of the scholar. Whether as a Jew, a Zionist, a Socialist, or some other kind of social-psychological deviant, the researcher seeks out the unusual locale of Israel and the odd subject of the kibbutz as the area of his researches. The scientific justification for such a choice is clear: both Israel and the Israel kibbutz are so unusual as social phenomena that it seems possible to use them as "natural experiments" in order to test generally accepted hypotheses under altered conditions. But those who appear to be most alert to the opportunities for research in Israel and the kibbutz are persons for whom more than scientific issues must be involved. If they undertake—what is unusual in itself—to test the fundamental premises of their science in Israel, instead of taking on a more customary fact-finding and fact-interpreting assignment in some more ordinary locale, it is because Israel and the kibbutz appeal to, and challenge, their own fundamental, intimate values.

Dr. Rosenfeld sketches a three-stage development in the attitude of the researcher

to his subject based on these premises. First, he goes to Israel and studies the kibbutz, because he is drawn to a locale which seems to respond in some way to his inner needs and problems. Then he finds that he must make a special effort to maintain a properly objective "distance" from the subject of research, for two reasons: first, because of the fear that his own involvement may introduce bias; and second, because he is constantly challenged by the members of the kibbutz to convert his involvement into an identification with the subject of his studies. A final phase which frequently concludes this cycle finds the researcher expressing out-and-out partisanship in regard to the kibbutz. In a very unusual minority of cases, the researcher ends by remaining in Israel, or even in the kibbutz. More often the ultimate bias is antagonistic. As Rosenfeld explains, the researcher has invested unformulated utopian expectations in the kibbutz, and he recoils with proportionate violence from the less-than-perfect reality. Another basis for the same reaction might be suggested. By its very oddness, the kibbutz challenges the researcher to question the hypotheses under which he has been trained to organize his data. But the capacity to respond to such a challenge is quite unusual; while, on the other hand, it is quite easy, in recoil from the demand to identify fully with the kibbutz, to interpret the incongruity between the existence of the kibbutz and the predictions of the accepted hypotheses as meaning that the kibbutz leads an artificial existence which cannot endure.

THE WAVE of experts that arrived in the kibbutzim after the creation of Israel was not made up preponderantly of economists and planners, as in the 20's, but of psychologists, psychiatrists, and anthropologists. Accordingly, the center of interest was occupied by the unusual child-rearing practices of the kibbutzim. Not only psychologists and psychoanalysts interested in the development of human personality, but psychologists, psychoanalysts, anthropologists, and sociologists interested

in diagnosing the character and prospects of human societies have recently concentrated their attention upon the consequences of differences in training disciplines in the early years of life. The separation of child from mother and the system of collective education in the kibbutzim offered a challenging opportunity to test accepted hypotheses in a society with a modern Western culture, but with child-rearing methods radically different from the ordinary practice.

It should be noted that in this area the practice of the kibbutzim was worked out, in part, under the influence of psychological and educational theories that were in vogue at the time when the kibbutz educators were trained or self-trained. They were also largely influenced, of course, by the practical conditions which had to be faced in developing the kibbutz system of collective education. But the stamp of *expertise* is still evident in some of the attitudes and foibles of kibbutz educators, no less than of the outside experts who have come to observe them. After the passage of a generation of researchers, what psychologists and educators confidently proclaim to be *the truth* has, of course, changed, but there is a great deal of similarity in the tone of conflicting pronouncements.

The first to articulate what claimed to be a warranted expert opinion about child-rearing in the kibbutz were the kibbutz educators themselves. The truth they confidently proclaimed was based upon the vogue of certain Freudian conceptions and progressive educational theories at the time of their training, which they then defined and consecrated by their practice. Roughly stated, the faith of orthodox kibbutz educators was that by letting nurses instead of parents train infants in their elementary disciplines of feeding and cleanliness, and by adopting a permissive, progressive, and collectivistic attitude to education in conventional behavior, it would be possible to rear improved personalities. The Oedipus complex might even be circumvented, and direct, outgoing, cooperative human beings would be produced.

This educational faith was put into practice not without resistance on the part of some of the kibbutz parents, particularly mothers, who felt deprived of an essential function in not being permitted to care for their children fully, and who could not suppress doubts about the theory and practice of the kibbutz experts. Now (in the past five or ten years) such doubts are being openly stated by the new wave of experts who came to study kibbutz practices. The removal of the child at birth from the full-time care of his mother, the impermanence of the mother-substitutes who cared for the child (owing to changes in the assignment of nurses), the frequent lack of attention to the child's demands because of the nurses' load of work and busy schedule, the relative restriction and isolation of the child in large play pens during the day and in the dormitories at night—all these made a picture strikingly similar to that of children being brought up under institutional care, in hospitals or asylums. The expected results of such child-rearing practices, based on the theory and experience of child guidance specialists, were that the children would be intellectually backward and emotionally impoverished as compared with children who enjoyed a mother's loving care, and that they would display a series of neurotic symptoms.

When outside experts began to observe kibbutz children up to the age of six more closely and systematically, they reported findings that confirmed precisely these expectations. Not only did the kibbutz children continue bed-wetting, thumbsucking, and rocking in bed longer than children brought up at home—these symptoms, ordinarily regarded as neurotic, had been observed already and explained away by kibbutz experts — but they proved to be intellectually and emotionally retarded, as indicated by standard tests. While only a few studies had yet been reported, there were significant indications that the verbal capacity and abstract grasp of kibbutz children to the age of six fell below that of children brought up on family farms in Israel, and their capacity to establish

social and emotional relationships was also relatively deficient. The general impression of the researchers was of children who were apathetic, much like the inmates of child care institutions observed elsewhere.

IF THESE preliminary results were taken as conclusive, and if the accepted hypotheses regarding personality development, on the one hand, and social equilibrium, on the other, were applied to the analysis of the kibbutz, far-reaching conclusions could easily be arrived at—and, indeed, such conclusions were promptly stated. On psychiatric grounds, the conclusion was reached that the system of collective education on the kibbutz must lead to psychically disturbed personalities. (The fact that adults brought up under this system gave a general impression of functioning effectively was not considered a sufficient disproof of this conclusion, since it is well known that psychic disturbances are not always apparent on the surface.) On anthropological-sociological grounds, moreover, a further conclusion was formulated: that a society whose child-rearing practices bred disturbed personalities could not survive its second generation. (The fact that the kibbutz has existed as a social system for some forty years was not considered a sufficient disproof of this conclusion, since it was explained away on the grounds that the first generation—brought up by loving mothers in the patriarchal society of the *shtetl*—had a specific motivation for living under kibbutz conditions, in its rebellion against the *shtetl*, while no such motivation existed among the kibbutz-born second generation.)

It must be said, in praise of the present wave of experts examining the kibbutz, that they have proved outstandingly prompt (as one would expect of psychologically oriented scholars) in criticism of their own possible bias and in submitting their preconceptions to the test of the facts. Within a few years after the beginning of expert observations, the first sweeping generalizations have already been set aside by empirical studies. Spiro's new book on

the *Children of the Kibbutz* marks a decisive stage in this process.

Some of the facts which should have suggested caution in drawing conclusions about kibbutz personality development and the viability of the kibbutz were available even without special studies. The fact that adults reared in the kibbutzim seemed to be functioning effectively may not have been enough to rule out any possibility of underlying psychic disturbance, but it was hardly proof that such disturbance was present either. The most reasonable conclusion to be drawn from such a fact, perhaps, would have been to wait for empirical confirmation before announcing that collective education bred disturbed adult personalities. Hence, too, it would have been reasonable to wait for confirmation of the fundamental conclusion, about the disturbed personalities of kibbutzniks, before going on to announce the corollary proposition—that the kibbutz could not last. But no sooner was the available evidence of psychic disturbance in the early ages examined more closely than additional reasons for reconsidering these conclusions appeared. The very studies that showed kibbutz children up to the age of six to be retarded intellectually and emotionally in comparison with children reared at home also showed that in the succeeding years the kibbutz children, both intellectually and emotionally, caught up with and then surpassed the control groups of children not brought up collectively. These results necessitated closer examination of precisely what was involved in the kibbutz system of child-rearing; and they have also caused some of the experts to re-examine the original hypotheses which led to conclusions about the kibbutz that were not borne out by the evidence.

In order to explain why adult kibbutzniks who were deprived at birth of mother's care seem to turn out all right, psychologists began to look more carefully into the question whether collective education really meant depriving the child of maternal care. (At the same time they left open the possibility that time or investigation in greater depth would show

the second kibbutz generation to be more disturbed than they seemed.) It was clear at once that there was no valid comparison between collective education in kibbutzim and conditions in hospitals and orphan asylums. The kibbutz child is not really deprived of his parents at all, for the mother nurses him, and his family comes to play with him daily through the early and later years; and even the most superficial study cannot fail to note the strong attachment between children and parents. Also, the nurses who train the children in the primary disciplines are not only permissive but also affectionate toward their charges. Thus one could argue that the kibbutz child enjoys, in essence, loving maternal care through the combination of mothering and substitute-mothering that is given him. Unfortunately for this easy way out, kibbutz children up to the age of six *do* show signs of psychic disturbances; a combination of part-time mothers is *not* generally regarded as a satisfactory equivalent for a single, always available mother; and the heavy work load and busy schedules of the kibbutz mother-substitutes *do* expose the child to frequent occasions when he demands maternal attention without avail. If, then, the psychologists are to accept the evidence that kibbutz children overcome retardation after six and grow up into effective adults, they must do so without assuming that collective education, as they observed it, provides an adequate substitute, in the early years, for the always available (ideal) mother.*

THE DIFFICULTY in accepting such evidence is that psychoanalysts are quite firmly convinced of the overpowering importance of the early years of life in forming human personality. Yet the psychia-

trists who visited the kibbutzim managed to keep their minds open to the facts they found in spite of the strain upon their principles. The damage ascertained in the first six years of life, they explain, is repaired in the years following because the group education of the kibbutz from the years six to eighteen provides something equivalent to a psychiatric course of group therapy. But this explanation involves either of two assumptions—or perhaps, both: it implies that the damage done in the early years by the degree of deprivation suffered by children in the kibbutz is not enough to damage the personality critically (which poses the problem of determining just how much and what kind of damage, under what conditions, is critical); and/or it implies that damage which might be lasting under our conditions is repaired under kibbutz conditions of child-rearing (and the whole process of bringing up children might be described as one of repairing, and turning to productive use, the psychic damage which is inseparable from any attempt to turn a young animal into an adult human). Both assumptions have been stated in the discussion arising out of research in the kibbutzim. The detailed observation of child-rearing in the kibbutzim now available in Spiro's new book supports either or both assumptions.

The rise and ebb of the psychiatric attack upon their child-rearing doctrine have not gone unnoticed by the orthodox kibbutz experts, but the onslaught has passed without substantially altering their beliefs. They say today, and they are supported by the evidence, that there is no proof that collective education is harmful to the human personality. But this is a far cry from the old confidence that collective education was going to destroy the psychic roots of human personality difficulties.

The confidence of kibbutz educators in their doctrine was never universally or implicitly shared by kibbutz members; and if collective education became the rule in the communes (though from the beginning such outstanding collectives as Degania and Ein Harod were exceptions), it is a rea-

* These findings have evidently not been without effect on the kibbutz educators. In the July, 1958 issue of the *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, Shmuel Golan, while questioning the findings of impaired health, reports proposed improvements for collective care of infants and toddlers which seem to have been suggested by the recent studies and criticisms.

sonable supposition that the prestige of expert opinion was one of the factors that helped to establish the institution. Today not only the kibbutz experts but kibbutz members are aware that collective education no longer enjoys a vogue among progressive psychologists and educators, but has been seriously questioned by the theorists and practitioners of a new vogue. In the old days, if a kibbutz member were strongly enough opposed to collective education, he had no alternative but to leave the kibbutz, for the prestige of the institution was high among the members. Nowadays, a kibbutz member who is opposed to collective education may find enough support for his opinion among the kibbutz members to change the institution and bring the children back to sleep in the family home: he need not leave the kibbutz, for there is a good chance that the kibbutz practice can be changed to suit him.

This development—among other far-reaching processes of change now taking place in the kibbutzim—has been viewed with alarm by orthodox kibbutz experts and with a lively interest by outside experts. (Some of the latter, to be more exact, beginning with the conclusion that the kibbutz is doomed, make two contradictory assumptions on this point: first that the kibbutzim will never change their system of collective education, because they are too rigidly dogmatic, and hence will expire in the second generation because of personality tensions; and then, that the kibbutzim will give up their system of collective education and consequently cease to be kibbutzim.*) Both types of expert, the insiders and the outsiders, assume that the kibbutz and collective education as practiced until now are inseparable, so that if one goes, the other must also vanish.

Such an assumption is certainly without any evidential foundation, and any underlying theoretical generalizations it may reflect are equally unproven. In any case,

* See the Diamond-Halpern debate in *Dissent*, Spring 1957 issue, pp. 133-51.

the members of kibbutzim are deciding this and many other open questions about the future of the kibbutz without too much concern for such expert opinions. A growing number of kibbutzim are bringing their children back into the parents' homes, while in other kibbutzim, which retain the children's dormitories, there is nothing like solid support of the system. On the other hand, the critics of collective child care in the kibbutzim are not gaining their point, where they win out, in a wave of general revulsion against the previous system; nor, when they have established the care of infants by the family, is the new system accepted without criticism in its turn.

As for the effect upon the viability of the kibbutzim of a change in the system of child care (or other changes now under way), this reflection is in order: what will determine whether the kibbutz lives or dies will not be how experts, friendly or hostile to the commune, define its essential principles, but how the members define it. If they decide that the changes they desire are not compatible with their definition of a kibbutz and nevertheless choose the changes, then the kibbutz will have expired. If, on the other hand, they introduce revisions which they decide are in harmony with the principles of the kibbutz as they define them, then the kibbutz will change and will live. The experts, in either case, will have no choice but to adjust themselves to the facts.

History or Travesty?

By JOSEPH SCHECHTMAN

THE NEAR EAST. A MODERN HISTORY, by William Yale. The University of Michigan History of the Modern World. Edited by Allan Nevins and Howard M. Ehrman. Ann Arbor 1958. (485. pp. + xix. Index.)

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN has undertaken an ambitious and highly commendable project of publishing a 15-volume *History of the Modern World*. Its purpose, as formulated in the prospectus, is "a global exploration of the recent past

which makes intelligible the current upheavals of our shrinking world." André Maurois hailed the announcement of the project as "a wonderful idea," and Edward R. Murrow as "one of the most exciting ventures in publishing and scholarship that I know of." Professor Allan Nevins of Columbia—distinguished historian, author, twice Pulitzer Prize winner—assumed the general editorship of the *History* (with Professor Howard Ehrman of the University of Michigan as co-editor). In a brief introductory note to the prospectus, Professor Nevins pledged "a series of books . . . written by authorities who could be both scholarly and lively."

Four volumes of the *History* have been already published and the topics and authors of ten more announced. They make an impressive showing. Each volume has been entrusted to a recognized authority. Every author has to his credit several major studies in his chosen field.

For some unfathomable reason, an exception was made in regard to the volume under review. The publishers who so carefully list the scholarly record of every author, are unable to credit the author of *The Near East* with even one single published book which would testify to his being an "authority" on the subject and to his qualification for writing not only a "lively" but a "scholarly" work. Professor William Yale is described in the blurb as a man "who was on the spot when much Near Eastern history was made": we learn that he had been military observer at General Allenby's headquarters of the British Expeditionary Force, expert on Arab affairs to the Paris Peace Conference, and a member of the King-Crane Commission. But all these positions (it could be also added that in 1915-1917 he served as representative for Standard Oil in the Near East) Mr. Yale had held nearly four decades ago, when he was a man of thirty. He is not known to have published during these forty years anything which would testify to his ability to become now the author of a dependable, documented, scholarly study on so complex and explosive a topic as the Near East.

Among the very few sources listed in the book's meager bibliographical notes, he refers to a 12-page article "Morgenthau's Special Mission of 1917", in *World Politics* of 1949, to some unidentified unpublished memoirs "It Takes So Long," and to (again unpublished) "William Yale Papers" stored in the Houghton Library (accession 50M 188), which he describes as "restricted." As can be seen from the outspokenly anti-Zionist *Realities of American-Palestine Relations* by Frank E. Manuel (Washington D.C. 1949), who has apparently had the privilege of obtaining access to this restricted material and who values it very highly, the "Yale Papers" are a collection of reports and "inside information" on political developments and personalities in and around Palestine during the years 1917-1920. Even in Mr. Manuel's most flattering presentation, they are strongly colored by Mr. Yale's (pro-Arab) likes and (anti-Zionist) dislikes. This bias was undoubtedly largely determined by his associations of that time. Allenby's headquarters was notorious for its Arabophile infatuation and hostility toward Jewish aspirations in Palestine. Manuel states that Mr. Yale "made himself party to the Arabophile sentiments . . . of the British officers working out of the Cairo Bureau . . . and moralized about the evil of the Zionists" (pp. 190, 199). In Cairo, Mr. Yale also associated himself with Syrian nationalist emigrés and, in the words of Mr. Manuel, often "fell in with their more hysterical forebodings." His reports to the State Department spoke of the Jewish pioneers in Palestine as "overbearing and arrogant in the treatment of the fellaheens" (p. 185). Among the few Jews he used to meet in Cairo, his main informant seems to have been a Miss Annie Landau who was militantly anti-Zionist (p. 180). He was not above indulging in a primitive sort of racial characterizing, asserting that "as in the past, the Zionists in Palestine have as leaders that disagreeable arrogant type of their race . . . and in many cases dishonest and ignorant adventurers" (Manuel, p. 189).

THIS IS Mr. Yale's background. He was indeed "on the scene when much Near Eastern history was made." But his record for that time is one of partisanship and intolerance. In the following decades no publication of his appeared to qualify this record. In fact, *The Near East* volume is his first published study, and it reflects the same spirit in which, some forty years ago, he wrote his spiteful reports. It appears almost incredible that the editors of the *History of the Modern World*, behind which stands the moral authority of the University of Michigan, have found it possible to designate Mr. Yale as author of *The Near East* volume.

The results of this assignment were bound to be dismaying. And indeed, the book is unrestrainedly partisan, quarrelsome argumentative, poorly documented, haphazardly constructed, full of omissions, inexactitudes, and outright errors. It would take many pages to enumerate even its major shortcomings. A few examples in the field which is most familiar to this reviewer will suffice.

Ten of the volume's thirty chapters (about 100 pages) are devoted to Palestine, Arab nationalism, Zionism, and Israel. In these chapters, the author does not even pretend to present a full and integrated picture of the events and trends involved. Each one is written *à thèse*. And the *thèse* is a combination of Arab nationalist propaganda and the American Council for Judaism's philosophy.

Inspired by these sources, Prof. Yale submits a peculiar interpretation of Palestine's role in history. He boldly undertakes to dispose (on pages 380-382) of "certain unproven premises" prevalent in this field. His main target is the principle—incorporated in the League of Nations Mandate for Palestine—of the historical connection between the Jewish people and Palestine.

"The leaders of the Hebrew tribes who invaded Palestine some three thousand years ago convinced their fellow tribesmen that their tribal deity Yahweh had promised them the land if only they would conquer it which they did." Later, "other peoples, whose leaders had persuaded them

that their Gods would give them what land they conquered, took possession of Palestine." Nevertheless, the idea of the "Promised Land" was "carefully preserved and nurtured," and "the Jewish people throughout the centuries of their Diaspora came to believe that it was God's will that some day they would be restored to Palestine." Moreover, this belief "was accepted by many Christians" who saw in the Balfour Declaration and the creation of the State of Israel "fulfillments of God's promise . . . If it had not been for this belief by Jews and Christians there probably would be no Jewish State in Palestine today."

But, expostulates Prof. Yale, "that which was right and just in the minds of Jews and those Christians who supported them was all wrong and rank injustice in the minds of the Arabs." And having stated the Arab position, of which he obviously fully approves, he virtuously philosophizes: "As between Arab and Jew, who shall say what is right and what is just? . . . There is no evidence to prove that the will of Jehovah is more just than that of Allah."

This weird attempt to apply the modern craze of "hidden persuasion" to "the leaders of the Hebrew tribes who invaded Palestine some three thousand years ago," is, of course, as original as it is preposterous. On the other hand, Prof. Yale wisely abstains from specifying who were the "other peoples" whose leaders are alleged to have "persuaded" them that Palestine had been pledged to them by "their Gods." Neither the Arab nor the Turkish conquerors had ever been told by their warlords that Palestine was their Promised Land. The alleged controversy "between the will of Jehovah and that of Allah" is Professor Yale's very personal invention, which he casually drops a few lines later by discarding the entire concept of *Ethic*, of right and wrong, in the Palestine issue. He advances instead the concept of might. With a magnificent disregard for established facts, he boldly asserts that "the real difference" between the Arab and Jewish claims "lies in the fact that the Jews had the means with which to compel the Great Powers to live up to their commitments

to the Jewish people and the Arabs lacked the means to do so. During the first thirty years of the Arab-Jewish conflict the Jews have had their way." But he darkly prophesies that the present *status quo* is not the last stage "in this relentless struggle: another *might* may make a different *right*" (p. 382).

Sorrowfully observing that his and some other "observers", specialists, and experts' advice and warnings in 1918 and 1919 had been disregarded by U.S. "politicians" when "these recommendations ran counter to the designs of potent pressure groups," Professor Yale does not hesitate to insinuate that it was "the Jewish vote" that had forced the hand of the "national politicians in the U.S. during the years between 1917 and 1949" (p. 384), and to speak of "Mr. Truman's subservience to the Zionists" (p. 408). His contention is that "the powerful influence in the western world of the Jewish Diaspora makes any early settlement of the Arab-Israel question . . . almost impossible" (pp. 457-458) . . . "Perhaps in some dim future *Shalom aleichom* and *Aleikom Salaam* may mean peace for both Arabs and Jews, but such is not likely to be the case as long as American politicians believe they can win votes by doing justice to one group at the expense of injustice to another" (p. 412). His only hope is that "the growing influence both among Jews and Christians of the American Council for Judaism, which opposes the Zionist extremists and maintains friendly relations with the Arabs, may, eventually, have an ameliorating effect on Arab-Jewish relations" (pp. 457-458). In line with this source of his inspiration, Professor Yale classifies the Jews in the United States into two distinct categories: "Jewish Americans . . . who are Jews by religion but do not think of themselves as members of Jewish nationality," and "American Jews . . . who consider themselves Jews both by religion and nationality" (p. 263). Zionists, of course, belong to the second category, of which Professor Yale violently disapproves. He is very critical of the Gentile statesmen who believed that "Zionism was a noble

and righteous cause . . . Their idealism obscured the fact that Jewish nationalism was as ruthlessly egoistic as that of other nationalist movements and that its leaders had few inhibitions with respect to the means employed to achieve their objects" (p. 207).

No Arab public relations man could be more militant in berating Jewish nationalism and glorifying Arab nationalism, including the latter's Nasser brand. Professor Yale hotly defends the Arab "neutralist" line and unreservedly condemns the U.S. policy of "attempting to brand neutralism as a pro-Russian, pro-Communist manifestation" (p. 462). He is also full of unconditional praise for Iraq's bloody revolt: should this new development "prove to be a catastrophe, it will be due to the fact that as a reaction to it the U.S. sent marines to Lebanon and the British sent airborne troops to Jordan" (pp. 463-465).

ALL THIS partisan pleading, however "lively," is anything but scholarly. Professor Yale is, of course, entitled to his opinions: he is free to make propaganda for Arab nationalism and against Zionism whenever and wherever he feels like it. But in the present case he is doing so not on his own. This volume is part of *History of the Modern World*, which the sponsors of the project (the University of Michigan) and its editors, Professors Nevins and Ehrmann, promise to make "comprehensive and scholarly in content." Professor Yale's *Near East* is not history, but a travesty of history; it is an oversized political pamphlet disguised as "modern history."

In addition to its heavy-handed tendentiousness, the book does not meet even lenient scholarly requirements. Its sources are few, one-sided and secondary. The handling of the factual material is slovenly; misstatements and errors, major and minor, are numerous, always heavily pro-Arab in slant.

The Gaza strip is referred to as "incorporated in the Republic of Egypt" (p. 383). In fact, Egypt never claimed sovereignty over this area, which has been since 1948 under Egyptian military occupation.

Since 1957 its borders with Israel have been guarded by the U.N. Police Force of 5,445 men from eight countries.

The victorious outcome of Israel's resistance against the invasion of the five Arab armies is ascribed not only to the Jewish "superiority in morale, in training, in organization," but also to their alleged superiority "in armament" (p. 408). Yet it is common knowledge that the Jews were pathetically lacking in arms.

Repeating the old Arab allegation, Professor Yale maintains that the increased Jewish immigration of 1925 and 1935 "resulted in widespread unemployment" among the Arabs; that Jewish land purchases had led to "dispossession of Arab peasantry," to which "no advantages accrued"; and that Jewish colonization "reduced the living standard of the majority of the Palestinian Arabs to a level approximately that of Arabs in neighboring lands" (p. 389-392). All these claims have been long ago thoroughly refuted and discredited. Professor Yale does not cite a single fact or figure in their support. The only authority vaguely referred to (p. 479) is an obscure "privately circulated mimeographed paper" by a Herbert F. Rudd. Professor Yale has a definite predilection for unpublished—and therefore uncontrollable—sources.

On p. 383 there is the statement that "the British created the Emirate of Transjordan with the consent of the League of Nations." Actually such consent was neither sought nor given: on September 24, 1922, the League of Nations Council merely ratified the British Memorandum exempting the area east of the Jordan River from the application of the provisions of the Palestine Mandate pertaining to the Jewish National Home. There was no mention of a "separate state of Transjordan" (p. 384). Likewise, the Shaw Commission of 1930 is referred to as "the first of several Royal Commissions" (p. 394), whereas the first and only Royal Commission was that of Lord Peel in 1936.

Nor is Professor Yale more accurate in dealing with Zionist and pro-Zionist personalities. He claims that before 1914 only "quite backward" Orthodox Jews in the

United States were "recruited for Zionism" and that support of "prominent Jews who had attained wide recognition among non-Jewish Americans" was secured only during World War I (pp. 264-265). Among such "wartime Zionists" he mentions Rabbi Stephen S. Wise who was English Secretary at the 2nd Zionist Congress in 1898, and Justice Brandeis who joined the Zionist Organization in 1912 . . . Mrs. Blanche Dugdale, Lord Balfour's niece, he refers to as "the daughter of Mr. Balfour" (p. 269).

Some of the author's inaccuracies and errors are minor, others are of major significance. It is difficult to ascertain which among them are due to simple ignorance or carelessness and which are deliberate misstatements. But the factual bases of Professor Yale's *opus magnum* are not less disappointing than its political and ideological superstructure.

On Jewish Survival

By MARIE SYRKIN

THE ENEMY CAMP, by JEROME WEIDMAN, Random House, 561 pp., \$4.95.

REMEMBER ME TO GOD, by MYRON KAUFMAN, Signet Book, 1958, 584 pp., 75¢, originally J. B. Lippincott.

EXODUS, by LEON URIS, Doubleday and Co., 1958, 606 pp., \$4.50.

THE ENEMY CAMP, Jerome Weidman's current best-seller, purports to be a candid examination of Gentile-Jewish relations. The theme is supposedly Jewish touchiness, Jewish distrust of Gentile goodwill, and Jewish stubbornness in continuing to view the Gentile world as the "Enemy Camp." The novel, as might have been expected, has been heralded as a serious contribution to the better understanding between Jew and Gentile, each of whom will presumably gain a clearer perspective of the other's psyche through a reading of this work. Such is the alleged objective of the book and so it has been commended by more than one normally competent reviewer.

The author explores his subject through the depiction of a marriage which is on the rocks because the Jewish husband is mistakenly suspicious of his Gentile wife's full sympathy and acceptance of the relationship. His misgivings create a crisis happily surmounted in a belated burst of confidence. The book is concerned not so much with the marriage, to whose portrayal comparatively little space is devoted, but to demonstrating how George Hurst, the husband, got that way.

Mr. Weidman describes George Hurst's bleak childhood on the East Side of New York with considerable narrative skill. The hero has been brought up by Aunt Tessie, a fierce old woman who strives to inculcate him with her pathological dread of the Gentile world caused by memories of persecution in Europe. His closest friend is Danny Shorr (later Shaw), a Jewish gamin on the make who cheats, steals, lies, and prudently contrives to lay the blame of his misdeeds on George. The girl whom George loves, Dora Dienst, is crippled in childhood through a vicious stunt of Danny's, then engaged in stealing a beggar's hoard of pennies. An Irish saloon on the corner, with its assortment of drunks, completes the childhood scene. The only momentary escape is a visit to Aunt Tessie's brother, Uncle Zisha, a more sanguine character than his sister, who urges George to model himself on Justice Brandeis as an indication to what a Jew may aspire.

The evil Danny exerts a baleful charm both on George and Dora, each of whom he exploits and betrays, while Dora in turn exploits and betrays George because of her passion for Danny. The denouement of this morbid attachment shows George forgiving Danny's assorted treacheries and ready to marry Dora, now a prostitute. To no one's surprise, Dora runs off with Danny on the wedding day together with George's money.

A shade sobered, George becomes a successful accountant. A Jewish millionaire wants him as a husband for his energetic, aggressive daughter. At the last moment George idealistically walks out on the cushy connection to marry beautiful,

refined Gentile Mary with whom he has two children and happiness. The peace is shattered by a call from someone investigating the past of Danny Shaw, now a millionaire hotel man running for Senator. If George will not talk, the investigator will disclose George's involvement with Dora to the unsuspecting Mary. This provides the opportunity for the extended flashback in which George's past is reconstructed.

The title is apparently something of a paradox. The real "enemy camp" in which George finds himself is the gallery of unsavory Jewish characters who prey on him and each other. The most convincing portrait drawn by Mr. Weidman is that of Danny; George is a straw man, and Aunt Tessie and Uncle Zisha are caricatures. Danny, on the other hand is a notable addition to that collection of unprincipled, rapacious Jewish go-getters whose creation constitutes Mr. Weidman's peculiar artistic excellence. One need merely recall such earlier works as *I Can Get It For You Wholesale* and *What's In It For Me?* which appeared during the Hitler years, to recognize Danny as the latest specimen of a type to whose depiction Mr. Weidman has devoted a considerable portion of his talents.

THE REAL subject of *The Enemy Camp* is the rise of Danny Shorr. It is the only part of the novel done with comprehension and intensity. The other figures are pale. The plot is contrived, though Mr. Weidman's technical adroitness carries him more successfully through melodrama than a summary would indicate. However, the author's ostensible thesis remains peripheral rather than central. The relations between George and his wife are nowhere adequately portrayed. The motivation for Mary's choice remains obscure since George seems to be a singularly unlikeable fellow. In fact, the chief deduction that any rational reader of *The Enemy Camp* must draw is that both Jews and Gentiles would do well to avoid Jews as much as possible both retail or wholesale.

While *The Enemy Camp* is hardly a contribution to inter-faith brotherhood and

should not masquerade as such, it has the literary virtues of being readable and swift-paced. There is no reason for the author to pose as a pious crusader. That is not a novelist's business. He must tell his tale as he sees it, and Mr. Weidman does justice to his perverse vision.

Remember Me To God by Myron S. Kaufmann, which has just appeared in paperback as a Signet book, and was the "Jewish" best-seller of the year before, is a much more honest work than its successor in this role. Unlike Mr. Weidman's opus, it has integrity. The author sets out to examine the relation of a young American Jew to his environment and his conclusions have some relevance to the life that he depicts. The novel—Mr. Kaufmann's first—deserves attention because of its painstaking attempt to depict the dilemma of Jewish life in America. Mr. Kaufmann's power is less than his truth—the reverse of Mr. Weidman's difficulty—but the result, in its reportorial fidelity, is impressive.

Novels dealing with American Jewish life are generally afflicted with one or more stereotypes—that of the crooked, rapacious go-getter in whom Mr. Weidman specializes; that of the gross vulgarian whose apotheosis was recently celebrated in *Marjorie Morningstar*, and that of the noble East Side dreamer whose goodness casts a light never seen on land or sea. Sometimes stereotype III is introduced to take the curse off stereotype I. By some miracle Mr. Kaufmann has avoided both the vicious and the maudlin. His second and third generation Jews, while not seen in depth, are recognizable human beings and not caricatures.

His hero, Richard Amsterdam, whose father is a lawyer and a part-time judge in Boston, is not worried about being admitted to Harvard. He takes college entrance for granted. His Jewish woe wears a more up-to-date wrinkle. His chief desire is to be accepted by the exclusive Harvard Brahmins—the New England blue-bloods who draw the line at Jews. Had the author contented himself with an account of the trials of a Jewish undergraduate at Harvard trying to get into the Hasty Pudding social

set, the novel might have remained as trivial as the ambitions of its pathetic hero. But Mr. Kaufmann had the courage to pose a fundamental problem. Richard wants to know why he should remain a Jew? The fact that Richard is a particularly feeble specimen makes his predicament plausible without weakening the force of his question. We are convinced both by Richard's doubts and longings.

It would be very easy to burlesque Richard's efforts to be a real Yankee gentleman. The author avoids this pitfall. Richard may compose an unconsciously funny handbook for Jewish students on "How to Become A Gentleman" in which you find such observations as "Yankees give their daughters horse-back lessons, but Jewish mothers just yell at their daughters to practice the piano," but the effect is not comic. Richard's real agony and perplexity in trying to define the nature of his bond is never lost sight of. Through his very weakness and confusion Richard manages to voice the dilemma of a generation. Without either religious faith or national attachment, what is there to keep Richard Amsterdam Jewish? At some point the young American Jew whose life is devoid of both religious and national Jewish content requires an answer.

Richard's idealistic father has little to offer except to protest, "I'm sure it wasn't God's purpose that the Jews should come to a democratic country just so they could fade out."

The liberal Rabbi, who urges the potency of the great past, ("We remain like royalty a living legend") does little better. Richard, who has taken courses in psychology and sociology, does not want to be anybody's legend and a "split personality." He wants to convert to Christianity because he is tired of "living in a majority culture and taking advantage of it, and trying at the same time to pretend that I belong to a special little group."

The best of the argument is had by the Christian minister who declines to accept Richard into the fold with the acid comment, "I'm trying to bring people to Christ, not to Beacon Hill."

The series of misadventures which pre-

vent Richard from marrying a Gentile society girl and becoming a Christian provide an artificial conclusion to an otherwise well-developed study. The *deus ex machina* finale is beside the point. Richard, though temporarily deflected, will be more successful next time. And if not he, his son will. The vacuum has not been filled, and the initial question, in all its gravity, remains.

IT IS NOT unlikely that Richard may look for an answer in *Exodus*, now that a novel about Israel has become a popular success. This reviewer admits to unblushing delight at seeing *Exodus* topping *The Enemy Camp* in the best-seller lists; it will do Richard more good, perhaps put a little starch into his spine and provide a draught of inspiration for his parched soul. But this reviewer need not be reminded by sterner critics that these are strictly non-literary reasons for literary appreciation. And there's the quandary, for Mr. Uris has written a very voluminous, very ambitious and very poor novel on a very great subject. The pleasure gleaned from the knowledge that the American reader, instead of wandering in the quagmires and doldrums of the American-Jewish scene as presented in recent fiction can glimpse something nobler, is genuine; but this satisfaction is considerably attenuated by the quality of the book in which the revelation is vouchsafed.

As the first novel on the rise of Israel in English to reach a mass audience, *Exodus* must be taken seriously. Thousands are reading *Exodus* eagerly—I am told, rapturously—who were able to withstand all the blandishments of the Zionist journals and the many books on the same theme, some far better than *Exodus*, which have appeared in the past decade. What is the author's achievement?

The over six hundred pages of the novel provide a hodge-podge of modern Jewish history. Russian Jewry under the Czars, the rise of Zionism, the kibbutz movement, the development of the Haganah, a biography of Herzl, illegal immigration, the War of Independence, life in Poland, Operation Magic Carpet—all this and more are to

be found not organically woven into the narrative but as chunks of information to serve as guide-posts. It is possible to use this technique creatively to give a picture of a period. A notable example is *U.S.A.* Dos Passos manages to intertwine history, narrative, and individual biographies into a significant literary whole. In *Exodus*, all too often slabs of information, undigested into the narrative and not integrated into its structure, read like hand-outs from an industrious publicity office or summaries from an encyclopedia.

The plot, insofar as it is the author's contribution, makes use of every conceivable cliché. There is the inevitable American journalist, a Christian nurse who falls in love with a tough, silent sabra, hero of the underground, a spiritually maimed D.P., a spiritually unmaimed refugee, and a host of others who become involved in the liberation of Palestine. The characters are card-board, the dialogue wooden, and the style verges from undistinguished to plain bathos: "He was a major when he met Marina, the olive-skinned Eurasian woman. Marina—born and made for love. Each man has a Marina hidden deep in his inner thoughts, but he had his in the flesh and she was real. Being with Marina was like being with a bubbling volcano ready to erupt. He was insane for her—he desired her wildly, madly. He threw jealous tantrums before her only to half-sob, begging forgiveness, Marina . . . Marina . . . Marina . . . the black eyes and the raven hair," etc. This is not an unfair sample.

Characters orate at each other in canned speeches which sound like particularly uninspired declarations by chairmen introducing the main speaker at Zionist meetings: "Every time the Palmach blows up a British depot or knocks the hell out of some Arabs he's winning respect for me. He's making a liar out of everyone who tells me Jews are yellow. These guys over here are fighting my battle for respect."

Stereotyped characters, like stereotyped dialogue, may be true to life; the trouble is that they are not alive. The sabras, the D.P.'s the Americans, all have their au-

thentic prototypes but they rarely become more than animated cartoons.

When Mr. Uris presumes to be inventive he offers curious touches. I find it hard to believe that children in an Israel children's village translated "Silent Night" into Hebrew and sang Christmas carols to regale their American nurse. It is possible that the password of the Haganah one Christmas eve was *Hag Sameach*, though even that stretches credibility. However, the palm for verisimilitude should be awarded to the author's portrait of Henrietta Szold.

To avoid obvious difficulties, Mr. Uris rarely names the historic personages who pass through the novel though they are readily recognizable. Charges of inaccuracy cannot properly be raised no matter how transparent the disguises. However, if one encounters Harriet Saltzman, a saintly American Jewess past eighty who organized Hadassah and is the head of Youth Aliyah, one may reasonably be permitted to deduce who this H.S. must be. But Harriet talks in a tough breezy manner, shockingly out of character. When addressed as "Mrs. Saltzmann," she exclaims slangily, "Don't make with the 'Mrs. Saltzmann'." Shades of austere, exquisite Miss Szold! The author should not on the one

hand pinpoint his character beyond doubt as to his identity, and then take such unwarranted liberties.

And yet the whole is better than the parts. The novel has scope. The characters may be merely pegs on which to hang the huge canvass but the immense picture has been outlined. The heroes of the action are the events themselves, the drive of the illegal ships, the agony and valor of the struggle. If no single scene has been refined and crystallized into art, at least an effort to present the total drama has been made. And in this case "A for effort" is not meaningless. More sophisticated writers than Mr. Uris, unequal to the magnitude of the task, have evaded the problems by scanting and minimizing the material. Mr. Uris did not choose this smart way out. If everything is too blue-and-white without qualification, at least the author suggests the tension and aspiration which created Israel; and this in itself is no mean achievement.

A footnote with a moral: the only novel of the three discussed which does not question Jewish survival is the description of the life-and-death struggle in Israel. I shall let Richard Amsterdam draw his own deductions. As to Mr. Weidman's corpse-like George and fraudulent Danny—they will have to be included out.



Spaeth

from the four corners*(Continued from page 4)*

were sincerely proud when they invited me to see the new temples. It is my conviction that a majority of American Jews would rather have buildings consonant with the surrounding small homes, the landscape, and with their concept of Judaism.

The opposition is often very vocal, and the attitudes toward modern architecture can be classified along certain sociological lines.

The "pro"-group consists mainly of younger, American-born, college-educated, suburbanites. They read Lewis Mumford's articles on architecture in the *New Yorker*, subscribe to *Arts* or *Art News* (along with at least one of the better Anglo-Jewish magazines), are familiar at least with the names of Wright, Van der Rohe, Le Corbusier, Gropius and Mendelsohn, have visited some of the museums and galleries of contemporary art, and have in their homes reproductions of Braque and Miró. The "pro" generally belongs to a Reform Temple, or to a congregation that has adapted Conservatism and even Orthodoxy to what are said to be the requirements of the time. The "pro" may not have much knowledge of Jewish life and culture, but he has at least read some of Buber and Heschel, as well as Tillich and Maritain!

The "antis" often include editors, teachers, professors, and other intellectuals who, however great their learning, have seldom developed an eye for beauty. For them, buildings, secular or religious, primarily serve certain utilitarian functions. They often own many books, but rarely pictures (and those they do own fall astonishingly below the level of the volumes they read). To them temples are conveniently located prayer-halls, or at best the large, over-decorated structures built long before the Depression.

Taste is of course acquired rather than inborn, and it presupposes a certain minimum of security and leisure which the "antis" had not known in their formative years. The immigrant who lived with his large family in dingy quarters may have brought with him learning but certainly not an aesthetic mood (Epstein, Jo Davidson, Weber and other artists were the rebels who broke away from this milieu). His "shul" was usually located in a recon-verted brownstone house and had all he needed—a place where he could study, pray, and meet his friends.* In the same city, but unapproachable to him, lived the "German" Jew, well-off, and with just enough "taste" to be able to build uninspired imitations of Romanesque or Gothic cathedrals, Renaissance palaces, Moorish courts and Spanish Missions that today strike us as outmoded in their loud and garish eclecticism.

But in the suburbia of 1959, there is the American Jew who reacts more freely to the trends of his time. His aesthetic preferences are not much different from those of his Gentile fellow-commuters. The generation born, let us say, in 1919 matured by the time they were twenty. By then the United States had more or less emerged from the Depression and the gap between the very rich and the very poor had begun to narrow. About that time America had finally caught up with Gauguin and Van Gogh, the teachings of Frank Lloyd Wright had begun to bear fruit, and influences of *Ecole de Paris*, *Bauhaus* and other movements was felt in all areas of everyday American living. If the sophistication of the suburbanites is not always complete, it is generally sufficient to distinguish

* The relatively frequent unattractiveness of pre-Emancipation synagogues was a historic result of insecurity and poverty along with fanatical Christian state policy: "Jews may not enlarge, elevate or beautify their synagogues," a medieval Spanish edict ran, and similar regulations were in force in most of Europe.

them from those who neither know, nor care to know, anything about art.

M^{R.} SUBURBANITE who resides in Green Valley, fifteen miles from the city limits, would feel as uncomfortable in a *stiebel* as his parents or grandparents would in a modern Reform Temple, designed by Percival Goodman, and decorated by Ferber, Gottlieb or Motherwell. Whether his vaunted religious revival is genuine or merely a practical instrument to cope with some of the problems of living, is beside the point. What matters is that he and his family do go to services and not only to lectures and social gatherings at the adjacent Center, and that as active members of the building committee they participate in the planning of the synagogue from the moment the first sketches are submitted.

There are many such people in the new residential belts, and most of them are a bit worried when the architect's sketches first circulate in the conference room. For even the modern Jew initially has an uneasy feeling at the thought of abandoning the traditional synagogue "idea" and has no other with which to replace it. While the synagogue is the oldest house of worship in the Western world, antedating the church by many hundreds of years, the rabbinical authorities set down extremely few requirements for the making of a synagogue. While the basic prayers can no more be changed than Hebrew can be read from the left to the right, the temple in Green Valley is such a novelty in Jewish history that even moderns find it very difficult to define its "synagogue-ness."

But what constitutes "synagogue-ness"? It is easier to answer the question in the negative—a synagogue is neither a mosque nor a pagan temple nor a Christian church. Before the 1850's, it was taken for granted that a synagogue should be built in the prevailing style of period and place, hence the gothic Altneuschul in Prague, the baroque Scuola Spagnuola in Venice,

the Georgian Newport synagogue, or the Greek Revivalist Beth Elohim in Charleston, S. C. It was only about the middle of the last century that conscious attempts to create a "Jewish-looking" synagogue began. Hence the praise lavished in 1846 by *The Occident* upon the new Wooster Street synagogue of New York, created by the combined effort of Leopold Eidlitz and his non-Jewish partner, Otto Blech:

"On looking at the front of the pile, the spectator will at once receive the impression that the building is intended for a place of worship, not of the poetical deities of the Greeks, nor the pompous trinity of the Christians, but of the mighty God of the Jews."

Examining today the lithograph of the no longer existing structure, one may wonder what could have caused the writer's exultation, and how he possibly could have noted any "Oriental" features in this neo-Romanesque structure. Efforts to concoct synthetically a "synagogue" style continued, and the architects, unable to avail themselves of a historical sequence, experimented with all kinds of Egyptian, Moorish, or ancient Palestinian style elements without making any contributions to historical truth or aesthetic value.

Were he alive today, Mr. Eidlitz would have been told bluntly that there is no specific Jewish style of architecture, as there is no Protestant or Catholic style. Churchmen have always tried to employ the best architects who would build the "House of God" in the style in which the town hall, the hospital or the residence of the well-

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to-do burghers were built. Jews, by the same token, intuitively refused certain characteristics generally, though not quite accurately, attributed to churches, especially the preponderance of vertical features, such as tall, narrow windows, high vaults, and awe-inspiring steeples pointing to heaven (although the confusion of late 19th century eclecticism did produce a few churchly synagogues, from a distance hardly distinguishable from Christian churches).

Today, liberal Christians build churches that no Rip van Winkle could recognize as such—just as he would find it difficult to acknowledge their non-fundamentalist tenets as truly Christian. But even as early as 1908, Frank Lloyd Wright designed a church in the shape of a perfect cube. In 1951, Wright designed another "unusual" church without a steeple (instead, the roof gradually sweeps to a sharp peak, a gesture symbolic of hands folded in prayer). Today, a suburban church may have no tower, or a tower barely a few feet higher than the remainder of the building. Even the cross is no longer held aloft but is lodged with understatement somewhere along the facade. The idea that a house of God must be heavily decorated, and the corollary notion that simplicity is synonymous with poverty, find ever fewer defenders. The suburban church, like the synagogue a few blocks away, hugs the ground and serves as a community center as well as a prayer hall, and to fulfill its additional functions it includes large and well-lighted reception rooms, libraries, gymnasiums, workshops, play grounds, and kitchens.

INDEED, so similiar have America's new houses of worship become in their outer appearance that, at a short distance, one may not be entirely certain whether a new building is a Protestant or Catholic church, or a Jewish temple. The three groups seem to seek jointly for solutions enabling them, in an era of standardization and prefabrication, to build houses for prayer that

are clearly, if undemonstratively, different from hospitals, office buildings, factories, department stores, or private villas. A case in point is the joint participation of Jews and Christians at religious architecture conferences, in exhibitions of religious art (such as the one recently held in New York's Museum of Contemporary Crafts) and, even more important, that Jews have been commissioned to design churches (e.g. Marcel Breuer who rebuilt St. John's Abbey at Collegeville, Minnesota), while synagogues have been designed by Christians (e.g. Philip C. Johnson's Keneses Tifereth Israel in Port Chester, New York).

By what means can a contemporary building—a flat roof resting on a steel-framed structure whose glass walls, instead of carrying and supporting the building, are mere shields against weather—be given the needed quality that would also permit quick identification? The choice of materials for aesthetic no less than utilitarian reasons would come first. Next, subtle use might be made of such objects of art as would hint, unobtrusively, at the function of the house (in the case of a temple it might be a hexagonal star, a Pillar of Fire, a Burning Thornbush, or any of a dozen familiar symbols, but always in a stylized and even near-abstract form, and never more than one symbol for one facade). Finally, the inscription, denoting the function and name of the place, should be designed with care, and serious attention given to the beauty of calligraphy.

For some people, this is not enough. They want a building, the shell of which should be as extraordinary as is the act of prayer. They may find Mendelsohn's huge dome of the Park Synagogue in Cleveland, or Wright's Beth Sholom Synagogue at Philadelphia (resembling the craggy mountain that is Mount Sinai) bizarre, and yet prefer both solutions to the "monotony" of a simple shell. But so great is the dread of Baroque effusion and confusion that most younger architects shun—some-

times unwisely — any outward feature that smacks of "flamboyancy."

To a thoughtful Jew the prevalent solution might be acceptable, once he bears in mind that throughout the Diaspora little undue attention was paid to the house of worship as such, and that any care ever lavished on a synagogue was expressed in the interior rather than the facade. As Wright might have put it, the synagogue developed organically from the inside towards the outside. But there is no way back to the modes of the past. Still the modern synagogue can be, and often is, pleasantly elegant without being ostentatious. Emphasis is placed on purity of form, and precision in smooth craftsmanship, as well as domesticity rather than monumentality.

The site is now generally chosen with a care that would have been impossible in a densely settled city where real estate is expensive. But in the suburbs, and even more so in more rural regions, an architect can select a site exciting for its beauty. Old trees, instead of being cut (as they would have been only twenty years ago) are now carefully preserved, and new trees are planted. The court is often filled with a garden, while an acre of lawn is made to surround the building itself. The green landscape unknown to the ghetto Jew, or at best, the subject of nostalgia, is now brought to the attention, and put at the disposal of the worshipper and his children.

AS IN ALL architecture, the shell tends to become a mere skeleton, with the skins of glass or thin brick doing little to stop traffic between the outer world and the interior. As far as the premises devoted to ritual functions are concerned, the builder cannot take too many liberties, since he is not freely conceiving a sculpture, but planning a house that has to be "lived in." It is taken for granted that lighting and acoustics must be good, that the pews must be comfortable, and the seating arrangement such that the ceremonies

at and about the altar can be observed by every member. But the architect must go further than that—and he often does. He may choose warm, pleasing colors, and such embellishments as carry a "message" without distracting the eye or the mind from the basic purpose of the meeting. Houses of worship are utilitarian insofar as they are gathering points for people. So are the waiting rooms of railroad stations. But whereas people spend only as much time as is necessary in the latter, the more time an individual spends in a house of worship and the less eager he is to leave it, the more will the architect feel that he has achieved his goal.

The architect, who commissions his artists, is in a more fortunate position today than he was in the twenties. Before the advent of abstract art (which, in this country, had had few outlets before the forties) the artist he employed would, if he went beyond arabesques and ornaments, fill the interior walls with figures from Biblical or more recent Jewish history (this could not be done, of course, in a place concerned with a strict observance of the second Commandment, but was done, for instance, in the celebrated lavish Wilshire Boulevard Temple of Los Angeles, decorated in the 1920's by Hugo Ballin with a series of murals). As a rule, the result was unsatisfactory, partly because there were no Michelangelos and Raphaels among 20th century American muralists, and partly because the intelligent, abstractly thinking Jew of today does not want ideas to be spelled out in obvious pictorial language.

The abstract trend in modern art makes things easier for those imbued with love of art, yet unprepared to see figurative paintings on the walls. Seeing twelve dots, or perhaps twelve stars, they immediately know that the artist wished to symbolize the Twelve Tribes. When the artist uses traditional symbols, they have stronger evocative power if they appear in irregular shapes. Stained glass is now used more fre-

quently than ever before. In the past, Jewish congregations were often reluctant to use this medium, which was associated with the church. Today too, the designers anxiously avoid not only story-telling windows that are reminiscent of the Catholic church, but any representational forms. There have been complaints (often justified) that large rectangles, squares or any other geometric shapes formed by colored glass cry out with such loudness that the worshipper's introspective mood is disturbed, but experimenting goes on, and designers hope to find a solution whereby they can integrate the radiation of transparent colors in glass, while avoiding disturbance, confusion or idolatry.

I have seen several fascinating richly textured tapestries for the Ark, treating religious symbols in highly simplified patterns of intense hues; there was enough unrest and color contrast to keep the eye occupied, yet the overall composition held together the component parts. I have also seen a significant switch from very traditional and often

hackneyed ritual objects to things of great individual beauty. This is a recent phenomenon, for when Mendelsohn needed ceremonial objects, he apparently could not turn to artists and designed them himself, handing his sketches to craftsmen who translated them into metal. In the last decade several sculptors have emerged who have been devoting themselves with great earnestness and understanding to Jewish ritual art, producing pieces that retain all the minimum features of a *Ner Tamid*, or a Menorah, and that are neither cold nor mechanically contrived.

Is one justified in saying that a synagogue style has emerged pleasing to all but a few diehards?

A cautious observer of the scene would reply: "We have not yet arrived—but we may very well be on the right path." Perfection has not yet been attained and one can easily point to dozens of structures that are part failures (though a complete failure is rather rare). But the culprit is not modern architecture and art. Instead blame

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must be put on two deplorable features of the time: sensationalism and haste. There undoubtedly exists a neurotic striving for originality at any cost, the mad desire of builders and artists to gain the acclaim of museums, or to get photographs into national magazines. There are also insincere artists and architects too eager to produce "conversation pieces" and to see their names in print. But in most cases they are victims of corruption rather than corrupters, insecure people who feel that in our highly competitive society they must win attention at any cost.

They work in haste, adopting a few "tricks" from celebrated contemporaries without applying them within the framework of a well considered system of aesthetics—and they receive praise and even rich awards from patrons who are equally impatient. It took centuries to build some of the more celebrated medieval cathedrals, but many a modern synagogue or church is expected to be ready for use within months. Naturally, the building will be water-proof and fire-proof, it will stand firmly and will be quite usable from a strictly utilitarian standpoint. As an afterthought, a quick effort may be made to appease whatever aesthetic qualms come up in the last minute by grafting upon the near-finished structure a pseudo-modern piece of sculpture or by installing some ritual objects that are "different" without being fine.

But it is even more often the patrons than the makers of the house who deserve the blame. I am thinking in particular of those who, in a desire to exploit "names," have sometimes engaged persons with great reputations in art, but with little knowledge of Judaism and not enough wisdom to admit shortcomings, and to make a thorough study after, and perhaps even before, accepting a commission. In other cases, neither party is to be blamed. A blueprint may not always turn out to be as satisfactory as originally envisaged. Inevitable changes of plans and of archi-

tects, rises in the cost of labor and materials, and resulting needs for economizing have often led to deplorable last minute compromises.

ALL THINGS considered, the record is an excellent one, and from a critic's viewpoint, the new synagogue is rarely inferior and often even more exciting than the modern Christian church. In any event, there is no way back to the past. This was clearly recognized in Europe where communities of Coventry, Cologne, Rotterdam and other cities that suffered severely in the last war decided to rebuild destroyed churches, not as replicas of their former glory, since no genuine replicas could be made, but as equivalents of the spiritual strivings of modern man.

They are, of course, not the "last word." They will in due time cease to challenge anyone and will come to be regarded as conservative, classical, and even "old hat" by a new generation—and thereupon the search for new forms, and a new religiousness will start again in full swing.

Satire and Politics

By HENRY POPKIN

EVERYONE complains about the current absence of political satire, but no one does anything about it. Steve Allen has wept over this cultural deficiency in *Esquire*, Harold Clurman has shed his tears over it in the *Nation*, and, periodically, *Variety's* staff joins in the popular lament. Will Rogers, the last comedian to enjoy the political scene, is a general object of envy, but no one seems eager to fill his shoes. Although we freely express our dismay at political events, no comedian will do anything so constructive as to laugh at them. Politics cries out for satire, for at least some satirist who will regularly remind us that the emperor has no clothes at all, but a stuffy aroma of

boy-scout good manners has infected the atmosphere our comedians breathe. Now purification is at hand; as we might expect, the *New York Times* has cleared the air. But the *Times'* witty and unwitting solution to our dilemma must be properly introduced.

Our political satirists have always worn the mark of the innocent outsider. Indeed, we need not limit this observation to our satirists: Jonathan Swift was never more effective than as a solemn stranger named Lemuel Gulliver. The outsider is a primitive sort who sees through ceremonious pretense because he has not had the benefit of an expensive miseducation; he sees things as they are because he does not know any better. Political satirists in the American tradition have usually been rustics of one sort or another—keen-eyed frontiersmen or shrewd Yankee traders. Abraham Lincoln's favorite political writers were typical; they were the frontier jester and the Yankee observer who called themselves, respectively, Petroleum Vesuvius Nasby and Artemus Ward. Their legitimate successor was the gum-chewing cowboy Will Rogers, who freely admitted his ignorance. His sharp comments were a little dulled by his firm insistence that he "never met a man he didn't like." The dullness is, I think, significant, because Rogers was the last of a dying race. Rustic purveyors of horse sense are as dead as hillbilly music because rustics are passé. We came to the end of the frontier long ago, and, more recently, we have seen the end of the family farm and the farm bloc. Even "country music" has become a product of the city. The answer to "How're You Going to Keep Them Down on the Farm?" was apparently "Nohow." Will Rogers was an anachronism; in his time, shrewd rubes were already being replaced in our popular culture by even shrewder city slickers.

The great political satirist of this century was a child of the city, Finley Peter Dunne. As long as he went under his own name, he voted Republican

and admired Theodore Roosevelt. But, wearing the mask of an Irish bartender named Mr. Dooley, he encapsulated Roosevelt forever as the author of a memoir of the Spanish-American War, *Alone in Cuba*. Mr. Dooley's descendants are the later generations of cool, sceptical children of the city. We know, however, that if the urban restorers of political satire are to wear a mask, it can not again be an Irish mask. The Irish-Americans of Mr. Dooley's time saw through, over, and around politics so effectively that they moved right in and took it over. Edwin O'Connor's *The Last Hurrah* is a late example of Irish political humor, but it reflects the humor of the insider; the Irish-American in politics speaks now as the seasoned voice of political experience, and he can not again become the blank-faced outsider.

Where then is our deliverer? The *New York Times* found the answer when Nelson Rockefeller went in quest of votes and blintzes on New York's Lower East Side. The proprietor of a delicatessen sold him a salami at the wholesale price, and a customer tartly remarked: "For Rockefeller he gives discounts." At a restaurant, the candidate said "Hello" to everyone present, but one man walked away without a word; he explained by asking a question: "Can I put hello in the bank?" An old lady told Mr. Rockefeller she had trouble finding an apartment she could afford; he told her that helpful legislation might soon be enacted. She observed: "I should live so long." A few days later, the Democratic candidate for Attorney General paid his first visit to Coney Island. He said to a "grandmotherly looking woman:" "I'm glad to meet you." She replied: "Will you be glad to meet me after election?" Within three days, Governor Harriman was publicly eating blintzes in Brooklyn, but no jokes were recorded; the *Times* had evidently run out of funny reporters. Next, each of the candidates for Governor was photographed with Mrs. Golda Meir, of the Israel govern-

ment. I am privately but reliably informed that Mrs. Meir commented: "I'm at least as good as a blintz."

AT WORK here is an old technique of Jewish humor: deflating dignity or the pretense to dignity by juxtaposing the skeptical, unpretentious Jew with the solemn, ceremonious representative of a formal tradition—with a Southerner, an Englishman, the Pope, the Tsar, or even a politician. This strange conjunction may date back to the old Jewish story about the encounter between David and Goliath. The best instance in Jewish folklore is the Jew's relationship with his Creator, a relationship about which a pious Jew can be remarkably flip. Characteristically, it has been noted that, in His arrangement with the Chosen People, the Lord got quite a bargain; for those who were chosen, it was not so good a bargain. An old Midrashic story, retold by Nahum Glatzer in *Hammer on the Rock*, further illustrates this skepticism in the face of the cosmos. A well-digger's daughter falls into a well. The local sage expresses full confidence that she will come to no harm, and, sure enough, she is finally rescued. Asked why he had no fears for the girl's safety, the sage explains that his certainty was founded on his faith in the cosmic order; the nature of her father's vocation made it inconceivable that the girl could suffer misfortune in a well. Then follows a comment by a later sage, opportunely named Rabbi Aha: "Nevertheless, the well-digger's son died of thirst."

Similarly audacious confrontations were created by the advertising genius who put a puppet figure of a Southern colonel on television to sell Manischewitz Kosher Wine. The same old audacity gave a special glow to Groucho Marx's eye whenever he leered at the stately Margaret DuMont and stopped

insulting her long enough to confess: "Can't you see I'm trying to tell you I love you?" It underlies S. J. Perelman's denial that he is a "mahogany-faced retired colonel of the Rajputana Rifles" and his encounter with a British tobacconist, "a fierce old party with white cavalry mustaches redolent of Napoleon brandy." It is at the root of the many jokes about the dignified Briton and the casual Jew. (Sir Neville Carruthers, after proposing over the telephone a lengthy agenda of teas and fox hunts, is told: "Oy, did you get the wrong number!") A marriage-broker suggests Princess Margaret Rose as a suitable match for the 43-year-old "baby" of a doting Jewish mother; on winning the mother's consent, he chortles: "Half the battle!") The old audacious principle colors the stories in which a Jew meets the Pope or Rothschild or the Tsar or any of the great of this world. (The favorite greeting at the Vatican seems to be "Goot yontiff, pontiff"; the first two words are Yiddish for "Happy Holiday.") Three travellers compare notes on their intimate friendships with the President of the United States, the King of England, and the Pope; the first two social climbers are topped when the third tells of attending a political rally with the Pope and causing De Gasperi—or Mussolini or Fanfani—to exclaim: "Say, Goldberg, who's your friend?")

After so much practice in deflating the great of this world and of the other world, Jewish skepticism should make short work of national politics. Let us therefore expand the political coverage of the East Side wits and the *New York Times* local staff; let us compel them to apply their satirical gifts to the national scene. Only their approach can restore political satire to us and insure that the great tradition of Jonathan Swift and Finley Peter Dunne shall not perish from the earth.

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